

Exploring the lived experiences of owner-managers who thrive at work

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Abstract

This thesis explores how owner-managers of scale-up companies thrive at work and aims to explore the experiences of owner-managers of these companies who are thriving at work. Empirical research to date is primarily conceptual and quantitative and conducted outside the UK with employees. This research addressed the literature gap by undertaking interpretative phenomenological analysis with owner-managers in the UK.

Key findings both support and challenge the existing thriving at work construct proposed by Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein & Grant (2005). Whilst this study was based on a small number of atypical individuals, this appreciative inquiry extended existing knowledge by describing the insights and experience of owner-managers who were thriving at work using their own taxonomy, clearly expressing their need for self-development and energy, but combining these with a third dimension of being happy on a daily basis. For some, the number of participants might suggest that the findings have to be interpreted cautiously, however the underpinning methodology provided a robust rationale for such numbers to gain a deeper understanding of the idiographic experience owner-managers have when they thrive at work. This research also contributes to the body of knowledge on spill-over, between home and work, as owner-managers were happy to have, and accepted, that their work-life and home-life would be intertwined.

In the UK the Scale-up Institute report of 2014 recommended that an eco-system be developed to support these companies, and the findings of this thesis produce practical insights for stakeholders within this eco-system. Educationalists in particular should be facilitators who focus on the strengths of owner-managers, recognise that owner-managers are paratelic learners, so enable them to spot and respond to challenges to support their thriving, but importantly recognise that the speed of change could be gender specific. It is incumbent on stakeholders in the eco-system to invest in external peer groups as a place in which owner-managers can be authentic, as inside their organisation they see themselves as role models to their staff, recognising the contagious effect their mood could have on those around them.

Declaration

The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award of this or another HEI except in minor particulars which are explicitly noted in the body of the thesis. Where research pertaining to the thesis was undertaken collaboratively, the nature and extent of my individual contribution has been made explicit.

Signed.....

Date.....

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Abbreviations

IPA – Interpretative phenomenological analysis

T@W – Thriving at work

Chapter One

Introduction to the study

1.0 Introduction

This thesis is concerned with understanding the perceptions of owner-managers of scale-up companies in the North-West of England, regarding their experiences of thriving at work. In 2014, The Scale-Up Report (Coutu), recognised that there were strong economic arguments for encouraging businesses to grow and recommended that there should be an eco-system to support high growth organisations and their leaders. Earlier the World Health Organisation (WHO) (Burton, 2010) had recommended that there needed to be a focus on the well-being of individuals if there was going to be a real positive impact on economies, as this would not only help enhance productivity, but also competitiveness and human sustainability. This current research carried out qualitative research with owner-managers of high growth firms to start to understand how they thrive in a work context, important both for their own well-being and because they are influential in putting in place processes that shape the work environment of their workers.

Following the work of Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) organisational psychology moved from focusing on the negative aspects at work to looking at the positive aspects of organisational life. “Positive” in the literature is not given a static definition but is seen as a construct that gives a boundary to stake out a territory of related themes (Spreitzer & Cameron, 2012), and an integrative framework that is both experiential and normative, weaving together organisational phenomena that is usually virtuous, energising and life-enhancing (Nilsson, 2015). Generally, extant research falls under two broad headings, positive organisational scholarship (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003, as cited by Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein & Grant, 2005) and positive organisational behaviour, (Luthans, 2002; Nelson & Cooper, 2007 both cited by Youseff & Luthans, 2007).

In 2005, Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein and Grant brought together some themes that were prevalent at the time when they proposed a “Socially Embedded Model of Thriving at Work”. Thriving is defined as “psychological state in which

individuals experience both a sense of vitality and a sense of learning from work' (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p.538). When individuals are thriving at work under this construct, they are learning and have an increased vitality. These actions are supported by agentic behaviours, with research suggesting that thriving is associated with job satisfaction and performance (Keyes & Grzywacz, 2005 as cited by Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007) resulting in increased creativity and innovative behaviour (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009), leading to more organizational citizenship behaviours resulting in improved health (Porath, Spreitzer, Gibson & Garnett, 2012) and is closely related to other psychological constructs such as self-adaptation, resilience, subjective well-being, self-actualization and flow (Spreitzer, et al., 2005).

1.1 Background to the study

From a review of the literature surrounding thriving at work it became apparent that the construct had been studied in various industries, but almost exclusively outside the UK, within large-sized organisations, and focused on an individual perspective, who function within those operations (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009; Niessen, Sonnentag & Sach, 2012; Paterson, Luthans & Jeung, 2014; Porath et al. 2012; Ren, Yunlu, Shaffer & Fodchuk, 2014; Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007).

Thriving is important from global down to a national level. The WHO in 2009 indicated that there was widespread agreement of the vital importance of well-being to individual workers and their families, and organisations in terms of productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability, which in turn impacts national economies and the broader, global economy (Burton, 2010). The United Nations in September 2015 adopted a sustainability agenda which included health and well-being as one of its key goals. The European Union concur with these views and declared that health and safety are of high importance in the European Union's employment policy, both physical and mental health, as effective health and safety at work has a major impact on national economies, business competitiveness and human sustainability (European Union, 2007).

In 2017, the UK government launched a report on Thriving at Work (Stevenson & Farmer) that looked at mental health and employers. It considered the state of the

nation's employees with regard to mental health and the impact this could have on both them and their employers in terms of cost and productivity. However, to date thriving related literature does not specifically explore thriving in the context of small business owners in the UK, nor does existing literature present a process of thriving for these owner-managers or acknowledge their situation as unique from employees. This despite the result of a Gallup poll, in 2013, which showed that the self-employed, which would include owner-managers, as the least likely to be thriving (Clifton, 2013) and The Scale-Up Report recognising that effective support for these individual's and their businesses could generate up to £225 billion for the UK economy by 2034 (Coutu, 2014).

In the UK, the government is widening its focus from start-up companies to scale-up companies with the creation of the Scale-Up Institute in June 2015 following the publication of the Scale-Up Report (2014). One of the Institute's aims is to create an eco-system to support scale-up companies on their growth journey. To ensure that organisations have human sustainability leaders need to maintain a thriving workforce to be sustainable (Fritz, Lam, & Spreitzer, 2011; Spreitzer, Porath & Gibson, 2012). Everything an organisation does has some form of human component, so leaders not only have to keep their existing workforce energised, to help them grow, develop, and adapt to changes (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009; Prem, Kubicek, & Korunka, C. 2017), but also need to develop a culture that attracts the next generation of employee for long-term sustainability. Asplund and Blacksmith (2011) cite the earlier work of Fleming and Asplund, (2007) who found that some of the world's best organisations were very adept at leveraging the power of their human capital by ensuring employees were engaged in their work which helped drive organisational performance.

Obviously, positive outcomes are desirable for all businesses. However, small scale-up businesses operate in a significantly different environment to that of larger organisations, the setting for most studies to date. As scale-up companies engage on a growth journey the stakeholders of these organisations, including their owners and employees, could be moving towards an environment that is fast paced, dynamic, with major technological and social changes to be negotiated along the way. These changes at an organisational level will impact all of the individuals of these

organisations. For owner-managers, as leaders, and their employees, they will undergo a subjective experience which may be stressful as they self-regulate in response to changes. However, having an awareness of what is happening can increase their ability to function, adapt, and ultimately thrive.

Owner-managers during the growth process not only have to thrive themselves but should be positive throughout, (Nel, Stander, & Latif, 2015), as their position allows them to influence contextual features and behavioural resources by their management style, (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Erlebach, 2010). Spreitzer and Sutcliffe (2007) suggest organisations with thriving individuals will be better equipped to respond to uncertain conditions facing organisations; they assert that “the learning inherent in thriving may lead to new behavioural routines/repertoires.... enable increased capacity to improvise and recombine competencies to solve new problems” (p.82). The vitality dimension of thriving may “contribute to an increased ability to build, repair, sustain, and endure challenges/problems/crises” (p.82). In 2012, Spreitzer et al. found that leaders who thrive at work had 17% higher ratings from the employees who reported directly to them than those who were not thriving, suggesting that leaders who thrive maximise not only their own efficacy but their team’s as well. Spreitzer et al. (2012) found these thriving leaders demonstrated behaviours which included being able to inspire team members to set meaningful goals for themselves which aligned to the organisation, undertake learning and proactively apply their knowledge in the workplace, with the energy enthused by leaders being contagious to those around them.

During growth periods, there can be an opportunity for owner-managers and their employees to craft new roles and identities. The creativity and innovation involved in crafting new roles can give a sense of learning and ensures tasks are aligned to one’s interests and strengths which gives a sense of intrinsic meaningfulness. The leadership style of the owner-manager is important for their own thriving and that of their employees. A style that facilitates self-adaption in periods of change allows individuals to become more self-aware in terms of their vitality and learning, with the outcomes adding to their thriving, which can have a positive effect on those

around them, (Spreitzer et al., 2012; Weigl, Hornung, Parker, Petru, Glaser & Angerer, 2010).

Owner-managers have a different connection with the organisation than employees and will experience higher levels of stress and from different sources than an employee, (Hahn, Frese, Binnewies & Schmitt, 2012). Hahn et al. (2012) found that individuals may feel contented and experience high levels of hedonic well-being, but it is only when they feel vigorous and energised that they take the initiative and experience eudaimonic well-being, as they feel alive which leads to higher levels of relationship orientations and personal initiative, with the latter being related to self-starting actions, proactive, and future orientated behaviour, overcoming hurdles successfully whilst working towards their goals. Cope (2005b) suggested that these sets of individuals are constantly learning, and this is sustained throughout their time in business with “the utilisation of that learning long after the learning experience itself” (p.22).

The outputs from this research will contribute to theory on thriving at work supported by fragments of practice from the experiences of owner-managers in the study. The research will help address some of the interests highlighted in The Scale-Up Report (Coutu, 2014) so can be seen as being responsive to the concerns concluded in this report whilst informing policy makers, educators, and practitioners of the future, as recommended of research by Transfield & Starky (1998 as cited by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012).

The remainder of this chapter summarises the thesis and is organised as follows. Section 1.2 provides the research motivation. Section 1.3 is the research objectives. Section 1.4 describes research scope and methodology. Section 1.5 the definitions used in this thesis and then section 1.6 discusses the assumptions and limitations of this study. The structure of the remainder of the thesis is in the final section.

1.2 Research motivation

In the UK there are over 36,000 scale-up companies in existence. These scale-up companies employ 3.4 million people and add £1.3tn in terms of combined revenue

to the UK economy, and on average are 42% more productive than their peers (Scale-Up Insights Report, 2019). Having read the positive impact these high-growth organisations can have on a regional and national economy the researcher's interest in the area developed. As a mentor and lecturer to small business owners this researcher had an innate curiosity as to why some owner-managers appeared to be thriving as their company grew, demonstrating vitality, motivation and eagerness to learn for their growth journey, whilst others appeared to be languishing. This research is undertaken to explore and provide insights into the subjective experiences of owner-managers who are thriving, to delve deeper to find out how they thrive and what processes they have in place to help them and their organisations thrive, and, overall, to gain an idiomatic understanding of thriving, in the context of work for this set of individuals.

1.3 Purpose, aims and objectives

The thesis will report on inductive theory building research into the domain of 'thriving at work'. The philosophical assumptions are a socially constructed ontology and an interpretivist/phenomenological epistemology.

1.3.1 Purpose of the Study

Research performed to date has examined thriving primarily in settings with corporate employees (Carmeli & Spreitzer 2009; Spreitzer & Porath, 2012) but has not explored the experience of owner-managers, as defined in this study. The purpose of this research is to explore how owner-managers of growing organisations in the North-West of England, thrive at work. The basis of which is an appreciative inquiry to determine what is working well for the set of owner-managers in the study and gain an increased understanding that could help maintain the UK's position as number one for start-ups and help improve their position of 13th in the world for growth companies, (Annual Scaleup Review, 2017), by revealing additional information that will inform the eco-system for growth businesses. Given that the thriving at work process using the model suggested by Spreitzer et al. (2005) is driven by three agentic behaviours and owner-managers have different motivations to perform agentially, at different levels, at different speeds, and at different times, it is possible they experience thriving in different ways than the model suggests. The

lack of research and literature gap on thriving at work of owner-managers of scale-up companies is one which gives this research the opportunity to explore this area, extending the research on thriving at work and contributes knowledge about thriving for a population that represents a significant portion of people and businesses in the UK. By using interpretative phenomenological analysis, the research strives to provide a rich description of a lived experience.

1.3.2 Research aim and objectives

1.3.2.1 Research Aim

Using the Thriving at Work model proposed by Spreitzer et al. (2005) to underpin this research, the aim is to critically examine and develop a deeper understanding of how owner-managers experience thriving at work in the context of growing companies in the North-West of England.

The ambition is to identify a series of experiences, behaviours and activities that commonly lead to thriving for owner-managers, and so add to extant knowledge on thriving at work and give insights to other owner-managers, educationalists and policy-makers who aim to support owner-managers.

1.3.2.2 Research Objectives

In support of the main research aim the study will include the following objectives:

- To critically evaluate the literature in the area of Thriving at Work in relation to owner-managers.
- To explore the lived experiences in the workplace of owner-managers in relation to the Thriving at Work model proposed by Spreitzer et al. (2005).
- To enquire how owner-managers encourage thriving within their growing organisations.
- To develop an understanding of any features of the owner-manager's experience of thriving that are distinctive for them and adapt the Thriving at Work model to reflect the contribution made by this research and thus give insights into how to support these individuals.

1.4 Research Scope and Methodological Orientation

The research study is small scale-up companies in the North-West of England who are owner-managed. These are companies that are independently owned and operated for profit. As a scale-up the company satisfies the OECD definition in that it is an enterprise with annual growth in employees and turnover greater than 20% per annum over a three-year period, and with more than 10 employees at the start of the period (Scaleup Institute, 2016). The participants had all been part of an educational growth programme for owner-managers and were selected after being identified as thriving using the framework set out to measure thriving at work by Porath et al. (2012). They were all based in the North-West of England which is home to nearly 9% of all scale-up companies in the UK (Scale-up Institute, 2019).

Qualitative studies are powerful in allowing perspectives to be highlighted and was selected as the research is concerned with developing understanding rather than theory testing. Previous research of Spreitzer et al. (2005) used a qualitative narrative approach when proposing the Thriving at Work model and subsequently Porath et al. (2012), Paterson et al. (2014), Niessen et al. (2012), used quantitative research to measure thriving at work. Whereas this research, in line with the epistemological position of the study seeks to build on the extant research base from a phenomenological perspective, using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), as a distinctive approach to qualitative inquiry (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The study will seek to focus on the lived experience of owner-managers towards thriving at work, whereas other researchers have explored the antecedents of thriving and the related outcomes (Abid, Zahra, & Ahmed, 2016; Jiang, 2017; Niessen et al., 2012), and thriving as a moderator between the antecedents and the outcomes (Paterson et al., 2014; Wallace, Butts, Johnson, Stevens & Smith, 2016). Such extant research views thriving as a positive phenomenon from both the individual and organisational perspective (Jiang, 2017; Ren et al., 2014; Rozkwitalska, 2018), which is quite distinct from resilience, which focuses on the behavioural rebounding in the face of adversity whereas thriving can occur with or without adversity and focuses on the positive psychological experience of increased learning and vitality to develop oneself (Spreitzer et al., 2005).

The study reports the idiographic accounts of the owner-managers as they reveal their understanding and conceptualisation of their experience of thriving at work. Following a series of open-ended conversational interviews which allowed the owner-managers to relay their experiences of thriving at work and what it meant for them, the transcripts were analysed, then coded, to distil the data into significant themes. This research seeks to explore and understand what contributes to their thriving at work. Identifying what factors help and in what contexts owner-managers to thrive at work. In doing so, assist by identifying any needs and gaps, and subsequently make recommendations to help owner-managers of other organisations thrive.

1.5 Definition of terms

Whilst the UK government commissioned a report to review of mental health and employers entitled ‘Thriving at Work’ (Stevenson & Farmer, 2017) it did not define the term thriving at work and it was very much focused on actions employers could take to create healthy workplaces. Whereas this research on thriving at work has adopted the definition of thriving at work (T@W) suggested by Spreitzer et al. (2005) as “a psychological state in which individuals experience simultaneously vitality and learning, in organisational settings”, (p.538). With the underpinning definition of vitality coming from the earlier research by Dweck (1986) and Elliott and Dweck (1988, as cited by Spreitzer et al., 2005 p.538) as “a sense of energy and aliveness” and learning being drawn from the earlier research of Nix (1999, as cited by Spreitzer et al., 2005, p.538). These definitions were later expanded by Carmeli and Spreitzer (2009), referring to vitality as a feeling of aliveness and being energised at work (p.169), and referring to learning as growth and getting better at what one does at work (p.169). It is the latter definitions of vitality and learning that has been adopted in this thesis as they specifically include reference to the context at work, the context for this study.

1.6 Assumptions and limitations of the research

For purposes of clarity, it is important to understand the implicit assumptions and limitations of the study, the topic, and the researcher.

The construct of thriving at work as defined by Spreitzer et al. (2005) was chosen by the researcher as a framework for the study. In doing so, the assumptions that underpin the Thriving at Work model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) are accepted, those being that an individual is self-determined, can self-adapt, and has an innate disposition for learning. It also assumed that individuals have the ability to experience thriving independently, and not as a result of trauma or adversity (Spreitzer et al., 2005). The researcher assumes that owner-managers, as participants of the study, have honestly shared their experiences of thriving at work. Although, it is possible that they may have been selective about what they discussed in the interviews. The researcher tried to minimise this risk by taking time to build rapport at the start of the interview and to discuss confidentiality and anonymity within the research process, so the owner-managers were better enabled to give honest and open responses.

Qualitative methodology comes with limitations. Interpretative phenomenological analysis requires the researcher to make sense of the participants making sense of their experience. By using this interpretative approach, it is assumed that the researcher can identify abstract concepts and meanings in the qualitative data. Unlike one with a positivist orientation, the researcher assumes there is no single, observable reality; instead, it is assumed that reality is socially constructed with multiple interpretations of a single event. Broad, open-ended questions allowed the participants to create their own meaning and interpretation of thriving at work (Creswell, 2013). In addition, it is assumed that the researcher will bring a set of values to the study. With these values, the researcher “positions herself” in the study and admits, and reports, her values and biases, acknowledging the “value-laden” nature of data in a qualitative study (Creswell, 2013). To address this potential limitation, the researcher has adhered to rigorous data collection and analysis procedures. The data capture of the owner-manager’s experiences of thriving at work was collected at a particular point in time, as such, responses may have been clouded by revisionist history, or the phenomenon of people creating/recreating their own histories over time. Whilst this is a limitation of this study, it creates an opportunity for further research to take a longitudinal stance and collect data over a longer time period than this study’s parameters would allow.

A further limitation is the degree to which the selection criteria for owner-managers may shape the outcome of the study and the extent other factors, such as personality and non-work contexts, may contribute to or inhibit them from thriving at work. Whilst studying the owner-managers from scale-up companies represents a variety and range of business sectors to allow common threads to manifest across a range of contexts, this broadness in the population may result in some discriminating factors being missed.

1.7 Research ambition

The ambition of this research was to discover whether or not owner-managers experience thriving differently to employees given their involvement and personal investment in their companies. As autonomy and decision-making discretion is the main antecedent to thriving it could be expected that they may experience greater levels of thriving, however, this would be countered by the additional power stress that comes with their role. Whilst the level of thriving was only used as an identifier it was anticipated that it could highlight some interesting insights with regard to the owner-managers' experiences.

As the owner-managers in this study had been on an educational course it was expected that they would have a learning orientation and have vitality as they had developed successful businesses. However, to date there was no research to show how this manifested itself. Spreitzer et al. (2005) described a model in which agentic behaviours led to thriving and thriving led to more agentic behaviours. Owner-managers should have a natural inclination toward agentic behaviours given their ability to shape the contextual features of their organisation and therefore could have a different starting point for the process of thriving than organisational employee, although, an owner-manager could experience different agentic behaviours given their position in the company.

The research is intended to result in a rich description of how owner-managers of scale-up companies thrive at work. What experiences do they undergo when thriving at work and what hinders their thriving from their subjective interpretation?

1.8 Structure of the thesis

While chapter one provides a basic overview of the research, the remaining chapters provide detail of each aspect of the study. Chapter two reviews the literature related to thriving at work. An overview of the construct is presented. Based on the results of a wide-ranging systematic literature review this chapter covers the specific research and literature from publications on thriving at work and related fields. The search was restricted to those articles that included “Thriving at Work”, and “Spreitzer” as this was the primary model related to the construct covered in this study.

Chapter three considers the epistemological and ontological stance in relation to the study and the rationale for choosing interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as a methodology/method. The specific research design for the study is given and includes the ethical considerations and the role of reliability, validity and reflexivity required as part of qualitative approaches, such as IPA.

Chapter four presents and discusses the findings from the data. This section contains an in-depth analysis of the owner-managers’ perceptions of their experiences and includes extracts from the recordings to better illustrate the results and the themes that became apparent through the interview process. Where appropriate are linked to existing theory and previous studies. The implications of this study for owner-managers of scale-up companies are considered

Chapter five concludes this study by providing a summary of the research identifying the contributions to knowledge and practice, along with the limitations of the study, and potential areas for future research. This chapter also contains a reflexive narrative of the role of the researcher.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Positive psychology has been a developing literature stream for nearly two decades since its introduction at the American Psychological Association convention (Nel et al., 2015) and can be seen as the “the science of positive subjective experience, positive traits, and positive institutions” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000 as cited by Nel et al. 2015). Positive psychology in the workplace focuses on the positive at an individual level and at an organisational level with the research falling under two broad umbrellas, positive organisational behaviour (POB) and positive organisational scholarship (POS). Within POB literature the focus is usually at the individual level measuring and developing the impact on the organisation, (Donaldson & Ko, 2010), and includes the positive psychological capacities of individuals, hope, optimism and resilience, that have been linked to greater job satisfaction, work happiness and work commitment (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). In contrast, POS focuses on positive results, methods and qualities of organisations and their employees, (Cameron, Bright, & Caza, 2004), researching from an organisational perspective to show the positive benefits of exceptional individuals to organisational performance. By acting in a virtuous way organisations can give their employees personal fulfilment whilst at work and at the same time contribute to the good of society, (Cameron et al., 2004), increasing its long-term sustainability socially, economically and environmentally, (Kira & Eijnatten, 2008; Spreitzer et al., 2012).

“Positive” in the literature is not given a static definition, but is seen as a construct that gives a boundary to stake out a territory of related themes, (Spreitzer & Cameron, 2012), an integrative framework that is both experiential and normative, weaving together organisational phenomena that is usually virtuous, energising and life-enhancing, (Nilsson, 2015). In 2005, Spreitzer et al. brought together some of these positive themes when they proposed a “Socially Embedded Model of Thriving at Work”. In line with the definitions given in chapter one this is a two-dimensional model with learning and vitality as the main mechanisms that are adaptable and act

as a gauge to ensure individuals thrive at work. Spreitzer et al. (2005) saw thriving at work as a psychological state in which individuals experience simultaneously, vitality, a sense of energy, spirit, and aliveness, and learning, a sense one is acquiring and applying new, or improved, skills in organisational settings. Thriving under this model can be seen from both a hedonic and eudaimonic perspective as it is a pleasurable experience and allows humans to realise their full potential, (Spreitzer et al., 2005).

Spreitzer et al. (2005) drew on the earlier work of Deci & Ryan (2001), who suggested that hedonic theory of well-being is associated with happiness based on feelings of pleasure, whereas eudaimonic theory of well-being is focused on living in alignment with one's values and being one's authentic self for long term growth. Individuals are happier when they feel they are performing well, at both an individual and group level, with the latter increasing the strength of their relationships (Fisher, 2010). Thriving is a daily experience (Niessen et al., 2012; Prem et al., 2017), and unlike the theory of resilience, for thriving to take place there is no requirement for an adverse catalyst, "Thriving under the model can occur with or without adversity, such that people can experience learning and vitality without necessarily encountering significant hardship or challenge" (Spreitzer et al., 2005). "Thriving focuses on the positive psychological experience of increased learning and vitality to develop oneself and grow," (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Whilst thriving under the Spreitzer model can be viewed as a narrow definition for overall human thriving, as it is focused on the particular context of work, (Brown, Arnold, Fletcher & Standage, 2017), the importance of thriving cannot be underestimated given the significant amount of time adults spend in the workplace. Rath & Harter (2010) measured five elements of well-being and termed thriving as the highest level of perceived well-being.

Under the Thriving at Work (T@W) model individuals have a joint experience of both the cognitive and affective components which together give individuals a sense of their progression, (Porath et al., 2012; Prem et al., 2017; Spreitzer et al., 2005). The construct of thriving is focused on resources for health, achievement, and growth in all aspects of life (Spreitzer et al., 2005) and in a work environment is seen as a potential that could contribute to enhanced work performance, although this was

seen as seen as secondary and an incidental consequence (Caza & Carroll, 2011). In organisational environments that lack learning individuals can feel depleted and eventually burn out, and when individuals have energy, but no opportunity to learn they can feel stagnated (Spreitzer et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2005). Having this two dimensional construct gives individuals a gauge to use to self-regulate for continued thriving and development over time (Jiang, 2017), making the work environment a place to live, as opposed to just exist. In doing so individuals can achieve their own personal and professional goals whilst helping the organisation achieve its (Boyd, 2015).

The scope of this chapter is to review the scholarly attention given to thriving at work originating in the seminal publication by Spreitzer et al. in 2005, which initiated the socially embedded T@W model. The chapter articulates its methodology for constructing the literature review, which is then followed by an illustration and explication of the conceptual model, including consideration of the research that has been undertaken to validate the model and its associated attributes, how the construct has enlightened organisational theory by its application, and how it aligns with other constructs in the field of positive psychology.

2.1 The methodology for the literature review

This review was constructed following a systematic literature review that focused on the T@W model established by Spreitzer et al. (2005). Systematic reviews emerged from the UK medical profession and have subsequently spread across many social sciences including management research (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003). The systematic literature review follows a process of collation with the aim of synthesising extant research. The process undertaken is transparent to those who read it, and it can be both replicated and interrogated. As such the method can be viewed as an effective way of collecting literature and gave a structural framework that can be followed for analytical purposes. Whilst this approach may be seen, by some, as excluding some evidence, as can be seen from appendix one, it allowed the study to concentrate on the literature from peer reviewed journals which focus on those that were defined as the best evidence or primary studies in relation to the thriving at work proposed by Spreitzer et al. (2005). This approach also offered a

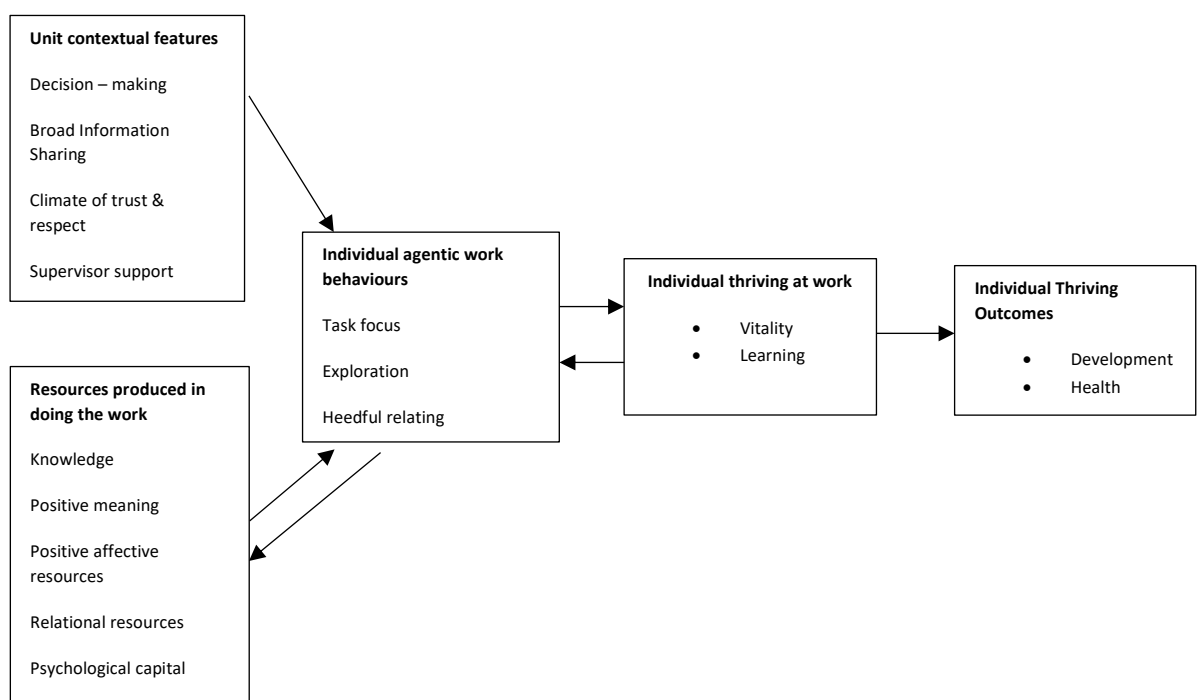
limitation to the literature review necessary due to the sheer volume of information published on the varying constructs related to thriving at work under the umbrella of positive psychology. The research strategy for the literature review followed the three stages outlined by Tranfield et al. (2003) namely planning the review; conducting the review; and reporting at each of the different levels of activity.

Research into conceptual literatures was conducted across several journal databases as each comprise a diverse set of domains, with the author deciding to employ them all to integrate the results and obtain reliable and robust data. The literature review was limited to peer reviewed academic journal articles and the analysis focuses primarily on those from a four-star journal rating in the Association of Business Schools Journal Guide 2015, as a basis of subjective quality. The one notable exception was the inclusion of research from The Oxford Handbook of Positive Organisational Psychology. The editors of the handbook include the main author of the original conceptual paper on thriving at work, and an eminent professor in the field of positive organisational scholarship with the book including chapters authored from established scholars in the positive psychology field. The key databases that were searched included Emerald Management, Wiley, Proquest ABI/Inform Global, ESBCO Business Source Elite, and Science Direct.

The initial stage of the review searched for the phrase “Thriving at Work” and Spreitzer. This is justified as this review is specifically looking at the application and emergent use of the model. In addition, the search was restricted to journal articles post 2005 as that was the year the “T@W” model was introduced. Initial searches retrieved 452 journal articles in total. Using bibliographic software, studies were removed if they did not comply with the criteria for this study or were duplicates, resulting in 211 available for use, of which 82 were used together with 13 papers from the Positive Organisational Psychology handbook (see appendix one for a further breakdown). As may be expected, the results showed initial growth in the reference to the model from 2005 until 2012 when the model was validated and then in recent years as the field of positive psychology becomes more established. The search criteria had no restrictions regarding subject categories as the aim of the review was to see how the model had developed and aligned with other research across disciplines.

The articles were de-constructed thematically regarding the classification of the journal, primarily psychology, management, and organisational. This stage was deemed important to give an informed overview of the use and development of the T@W model and allows others to understand how themes in this research have been built up from the studies selected. The major themes were the validation and advancement of the original model, the application and testing of the model, research demonstrating alignment with organisational theory and other positive constructs, and practical considerations for organisations to support thriving in the workplace. The remainder of this chapter highlights the main findings from the review with primarily a focus on those that would have significant relevance to owner-managers and their scale-up companies.

2.2 The conceptual model



Source: Patterson, Luthans, and Jeung (2014 as adapted from Spreitzer et al., 2005)

The T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) combines learning and vitality which together enable individuals to thrive. This learning and vitality framework served as a reference for understanding how thriving has been experienced by owner-

managers. The T@W (Spreitzer et al., 2005) model has self-development theory as an underlying assumption and a key mechanism for how situational context affects behaviour. Thriving individuals are not satisfied with the status quo, but are self-learners, seeking out new opportunities to work and grow in alignment with their preferred identity, thriving as a result of their self-determined behaviours and self-adaptability (Kira & Balkin, 2014). The T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) assumes individuals have an innate predisposition for learning and growing, to conquer challenges, and as social animals integrate this learning into their social environment so combining hedonic pleasure with eudaimonic potential, (Spreitzer et al., 2005). It is important for leaders of organisations to recognise that organisations are effective environments to foster human growth (Spreitzer et al., 2005), as learning at work gives an individual a sense of continually improving (Porath et al., 2012). This mastery builds individual meaning and purpose that can foster intrinsic motivation, build confidence, and create legitimacy to move beyond the status quo and try new things, (Carmeli, Brueller, & Dutton, 2009), overcoming self-doubt to perform at the highest levels, (Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2017).

When individuals experience vitality at work they are more likely to have the energy and motivation to engage in innovative activities, (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). This view on vitality is underpinned by the earlier broaden and build theory of positive emotions by Fredrickson (2001 as cited by Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009) and states that when individuals experience positive emotions, they broaden their thought repertoires building intellectual, psychological and social resources. At an individual level this vitality is an important phenomenon as it gives the individual the capacity to grow (Baruch, Grimland, & Vigoda-Gado, 2014), and has been associated with positive outcomes such as job performance (Carmeli et al., 2009); innovation (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009); creativity (Kark & Carmeli 2009), and at a social level fuels a sense of empowerment to help others (Nilsson, 2015).

The likelihood of an individual thriving at work is increased if they can engage in agentic work behaviours, (task focus, exploration, and heedful relating), and these behaviours become the engine that fuels the model (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Both males and females thrive when they work agentially (Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2017), but to do so they need to be facilitated by stable contextual features (decision-

making discretion, information sharing, have a climate of trust and support) and have behavioural resources available (knowledge, positive meaning, positive affective resources, relational resources and psychological capital). Agentic working can stimulate the development of further resources, which acts as a catalyst for thriving, producing outcomes like growth, improved health and performance, (Boyd, 2015; Niessen et al., 2012; Porath et al., 2012), and is enhanced by the degree to which individuals “are situated in autonomy supportive climates fostered by high employee involvement”, (Wallace et al., 2016, p.17), although the degree of thriving may be moderated by the level of energy resources of the individual (Niessen, Mäder, Stride, & Jimmieson, 2017).

Within the construct of thriving at work leaders of organisations have a pivotal role, not only is it important for them to thrive at work on an individual level, by learning and having vitality, but as leaders of the organisation they are in a position to influence contextual features and behavioural resources by their management and leadership style (Butterfield et al., 2010; Inceoglu, Thomas, Chu, Plans, & Gerbasi, 2018). For individuals within the organisation, the work context provides opportunities for thriving through social interaction, access to knowledge and decision-making discretion (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2005), and where “organisations are innovative, growing, offer both their leaders and employees the possibility to feel genuine and authentic”, resembling a positive leadership approach (Haigh & Hoffman, 2012, as cited by Meyer, 2015, p.182), putting both “the individuals and the organisations on an upward trajectory”, (Meyer, 2015, p.194), showing effective leadership contributes to employee well-being and positive health outcomes, (Keyes et al. 2001 as cited by Spreitzer et al., 2005; Walumbwa, Muchiri, Misati, Wu, & Meiliani, 2017).

However, the leaders in their role within the organisation can experience high levels of stress, termed in organisational literature as power stress (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005), which comes from their position of authority, decision-making discretion, and having a unique role to steer the organisation both operationally and strategically. They are responsible for guiding people with positive energy, providing purpose through their commitment and actions, giving development opportunities, positive feedback, accessibility, and resources for the benefit of their team and for the overall

organisation, so with this level of responsibility it is critical for leaders to thrive at work. Spreitzer et al. (2012) found that leaders who perceive themselves as thriving indicated that they were healthier, with few physical or nonphysical complaints, and their sense of vitality and learning gave them a greater ability to adjust to change and handling any difficulties they encounter (Spreitzer et al., 2012).

For long term success thriving organisations need to be sustainable by developing and ensuring they have the necessary resources to meet future needs. They need employees who are thriving, who stay open to alternative identities, cognitions, tasks and collaborations instead of limiting themselves to working only in the areas that directly correspond to their preferred identities (Kira & Balkin, 2014). Changes at an organisational level, both positive and negative, will impact on the individuals of that organisation. One of the aims of management is to get individuals excited about future growth, so they build up resilience for change that enables them to manage the process. For owner-managers, as leaders of growing companies, and their employees, they will undergo a subjective experience which may be stressful as they self-regulate in response to changes. However, having an awareness of what is happening and an understanding of how to adapt can increase an individual's ability to function which helps them thrive. Leaders throughout the change not only have to thrive themselves, but also recognise the adversities and stress their employees may be facing, with performance improvement occurring when employees simultaneously experience vitality and growth, giving organisations the opportunity to develop employees and grow a sustainable organisation (Paterson et al., 2014). Thus, the T@W (Spreitzer et al., 2005) model can give leaders and managers a gauge to measure an employee's vitality and degree of learning to enable greater thriving at work.

Galinsky, Matos, & Sakai-O'Neill, (2013) suggested that time, through autonomy and flexibility, has become the new currency in organisations. With individuals having to learn to navigate protean (changeable) careers (Porath et al., 2012 citing Hall, 1998), to show initiative and take responsibility for their own professional development (Bakker & Scaufeli, 2008 as cited by Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011). As well as, sustain and be committed to a high level of performance, health, and well-being over time (Pfeffer 2010 as cited by Galinsky et al., 2012), all of which can be

challenging if recovery opportunities are scarce. It is important for leaders to demonstrate that they place a high value on their employees by being supportive and flexible as this approach has been linked to higher effectiveness in a more global, competitive, and technology-driven workplace (Galinsky et al., 2012). A flexible approach acts as a method to reduce stress in the workplace as it allows for more balance between work and family roles for the individual (Rego & Cunha, 2008) and helps to give an engaged individual the necessary resources to commit to their role. Hence organisations need policies and practices to align with the needs of their employees (Nolan, 2015) to reduce absenteeism and staff turnover. Which for millennials will include the opportunity to undertake meaningful and purposeful work that does not require substantial recovery time (Spreitzer et al., 2012), requiring leaders to create organisations that nurture employee vitality and learning to improve the economic and environmental impact of the organisation, while simultaneously sustaining human performance.

2.3 Validation of the model

A number of scholars (Niessen et al., 2012; Paterson et al., 2014; Porath et al., 2012) incorporated aspects of the model into their research leading to the validation of the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) and the inter-linkages of the different variables. Porath et al. (2012), in their first study found support for the “two-dimensional” structure of thriving and the inter-connectedness of vitality and learning by developing and validating a measure to demonstrate when thriving is taking place, supporting the work of Spreitzer et al. (2005). The thriving at work construct is distinct from other related positive constructs as it is a joint experience, of learning and vitality, giving it a two-dimensional distinction. When individuals have a learning orientation and this is combined with vitality they will generate more energy (Porath et al., 2012). Thriving at work operates as an internal gauge for personal development and growth (Wallace et al., 2016), helping individuals set career goals, identify career opportunities, develop resources for addressing career obstacles and thus adapt to various career environments, adding to their self-efficacy (Jiang, 2017). This career orientation can give the individual a vitality and a passion to develop in their work, they will feel safe in their capabilities, skills and internal resources to complete projects successfully (Baruch et al., 2014), and are able to

divert resources to do a better job, investing additional resources to overcome hurdles, develop more creative solutions (Kark & Carmeli, 2009), tackle problems in innovative ways (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009), moving up the organisation hierarchy to create and lead new projects in line with their inner values (Baruch et al., 2014).

When an individual's goals are consistent with their personal values they are more likely to attain those goals and experience general well-being (Sheldon & Elliott, 1998, 1999 as cited by Bono, Davies, & Rasch, 2011). When work contexts allow an individual a level of autonomy to carve out their own work environment aligned to their individual self it can nurture thriving, as it can instil intrinsic motivation and self-determination to progress and experience positive emotions from acting agentially. Whereas, for those whose work is not aligned to their individual self, such as those who surface act in their role, it can lead to emotional exhaustion which can spill over to the following day's engagement as the individual withholds investment of their entire selves at work (Uy, Jia Lin, & Ilies, 2017). For those who focus on duty and responsibility in their role there is less likelihood of engagement in agentic behaviours (Wallace et al., 2016), resulting in individuals who are more likely to wither due to a failure of building resources for the future (Kira & Balkin, 2014).

The energy created by thriving individuals can have a positive effect on colleagues and this can create positive spirals for other individuals, teams, and organisational thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2012; Weigl et al., 2010). Baker & Quinn (2009 as cited by Spreitzer, Lam, & Quinn, 2011) found that some individuals in organisations are energisers who tend to attract others, whilst de-energisers can repel others, resulting in "high-performing organisations having three times more positive energisers than average organisations" (Mishra & Mishra 2011 cited Baker 2004, p.43). In periods of change leaders need to consider ways to invigorate employees and broaden their perspectives as it is important to have positive energy flowing at both an individual and a team level to move the organisation forward on an upward trajectory.

2.3.1 *Agentic behaviours*

Agentic behaviours reflect the ways individuals carry out their daily activities and when individuals are "active and purposeful in their work, they are said to act

agentially”, (Bandura 2001, as cited by Spreitzer et al., 2005, p.540). Central to the T@W model are agentic behaviours, seen as the mechanism that enables an individual to continue to thrive. When an individual acts agentially they increase resources and add to the organisational context required for thriving to take place. These behaviours include task focus, exploration and heedful relating. Paterson et al. (2014) found a significant correlation between task focus and learning, and that the application of new skills and competencies can lead to a sense of continual improvement, and so avoids feelings of incompetence from not learning, (Porath et al., 2012).

When individuals are fully engaged in a task, they are employing their greatest strengths and skills to meet challenges and are said to be in a state of ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, as cited by Spreitzer et al., 2005). This agentic behaviour is closely aligned to work engagement and captures the experience an individual is undergoing when performing their work: as it is stimulating and energetic, something to which they really want to devote time and effort to (the vigour component); as a significant and meaningful pursuit (dedication); and is engrossing and interesting (Bakker et al., 2008, cited by Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011). Individuals can be happy performing both directed and self-directed tasks, but it is when they are given autonomy to self-direct that it leads to vitality, leading to reduced physical symptoms, faster recovery from fatigue and increased performance (Muraven, Deci & Ryan, 2006, cited by Spreitzer et al., 2011). A level of autonomy and decision-making discretion can help an individual to thrive as it can give individuals intrinsic motivation that can spur them on to perform a task for its own enjoyment, rather than being compelled to do so, and can increase creativity (Kark & Carmeli, 2009), which can subsequently increase subjective vitality and learning.

Self-determination theory suggests that when activities and tasks are structured to satisfy an individual’s need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, energy can be increased and renewed to allow organisations to focus on those behaviours that generate energy (Gardner & Cummings, 1988 as cited by Spreitzer et al., 2011). When individuals focus on a job task, and have the requisite work resources they can act creatively resulting in subjective vitality for the individuals concerned (Atwater & Carmeli, 2009; Kark & Carmeli, 2009), aiding their thriving as it gives the

individual an energy by being involved in their work, then a further burst of energy from the sense of accomplishment, (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Thriving individuals have the energy to recognise, investigate, problem solve, and to ultimately implement improvements to work processes, thus increasing their cognitive resources in the process (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). As individuals develop at work they get a sense of feeling energised and alive (vitality), making up for any energy expended undertaking the task (Paterson et al., 2014; Porath et al., 2012), and this vitality relates positively to enhanced health both mental and physical, (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Spreitzer et al. (2005) described vitality as being a positive feeling of being energised, of having zest for one's work, and links to the earlier work of Nix et al. (1999) and Miller and Silver (1997).

“If employees cannot sustain their energy over long periods of time, organisations cannot expect them to achieve consistently high-level performance” Fritz, et al. (2011, p.30). Some theorists view energy as a finite resource and take a conservationist approach to energy management, whilst others take an expansionist approach (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Conservationists postulate that individuals are motivated to acquire and reinvent their energy resources, to look to grow and protect their energy in order to avoid losses (Hobfoll, 1989 as cited by Baruch et al., 2014). Task focus can be a driver for energy up to a point, after which it could deplete energy that needs to be replenished otherwise performance will decline, resulting in a reduction in agentic behaviours and lower levels of thriving (Niessen et al., 2012). Spreitzer et al. (2011), agreed with this stance for short-term energy usage, especially if those activities are self-controlled, but in the long-term task focus can increase an individual's energy levels as learning and self-fulfilment takes place. The T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) has inbuilt job resources and contextual features that support agentic behaviours leading to feeling of vitality which assist individuals with their energy management (Fritz et al., 2011), and acts as an important resource that individuals value, especially in periods of challenge or in stressful situations, (Baruch et al., 2014).

The second agentic behaviour is exploration which links to both learning and vitality. This behaviour must be carefully managed by leaders to ensure that innovations are within the risk profile of the company and do not act as a distraction

which reduces task focus and delays problem resolution (Bono et al., 2011). When individuals are given an environment in which to explore and generate new ideas and to problem-solve, they produce increased positive energy from growing in new directions, discovering new ways of working, adding to the resources of the organisation (Sonenshein, 2014). Individuals who are thriving, have both learning and vitality, are more likely to have higher levels of innovation (Prem et al., 2017), and increased innovative work behaviour (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). This innovation can occur at the job level as thriving individuals will look for opportunities to innovate and craft new ways of working to create meaning, or collaborate with others to create an identity (Spreitzer et al., 2012). The crafting of new roles can generate positive affective states as it can give a sense of learning that ensures tasks are aligned to one's interests and strengths generating a sense of intrinsic meaningfulness and self-adaption. These positive identities help strengthen the individual in the workplace through a cultivation of social resources as they act agentically (Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2010).

Leaders can facilitate this self-adaption process through their leadership style and the implementation of processes that influence relational climates and employee expectations (Mossholder, Richardson, & Settoon, 2011). This allows individuals to self-adapt and become self-aware in terms of their level of vitality and growth, and by undertaking self-reflection self-initiate change through new ways of thinking and encountering new situations (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Leaders need to recognise and identify the different learning orientations of their employees, telic and paratelic, (Salerno, 2009), to ensure that their employees self-adapt in line with their strengths. For some, with a telic orientation, they receive eudiamonic pleasure from the achievement of the final goal and related external validation of their skills and knowledge. Whereas for others learning is hedonistic, and they have a paratelic orientation, receiving pleasure from the process of self-development which encourages increased exploration and creativeness, resulting in a greater appreciation of the results, (Salerno, 2009).

As organisations evolve it is not only existing employees who have to craft new roles and adapt to new circumstances, but also new employees joining the organisation. Organisations should have on-boarding initiatives to allow the entrant

to learn new skills and knowledge as they define their role which will add to their vitality (Spreitzer et al., 2012) and socialisation processes that if initiated correctly can be a positive experience that adds to their thriving (Carmeli et al., 2009) and allow them to feel a bona fide member of the team (Ashforth, Myers, & Sluss, 2011). Porath et al. (2012) validated the T@W model across five different industries with diverse populations and found relationships between personality traits that may predispose some individuals to experience more, or less, thriving than others. These traits include initiative, self-efficacy, high core self-evaluations, and a willingness to learn. Jiang (2017) found that personality helped individuals particularly with the learning component of the model. Individuals with an extrovert or proactive character are found to more likely to engage in learning to achieve their goals (Payne, Youngcourt & Beaubien, 2007 as cited by Bono et al., 2011; Jiang 2017) and have higher learning orientations. These individuals tend to initiate intentional constructive changes and identify self-improvement opportunities (Porath et al., 2012). Hence there is a correlation between individuals who report higher levels of thriving in their work and those who are found to have higher levels of job performance (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer, Porath, & Gibson, 2013).

Humans are wired to connect and are social animals, so connections with others are vital for human development and growth (Kark, 2011). The social embeddedness model of thriving at work positions relational resources as antecedents to thriving (Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2017). The T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) draws on the work of earlier researchers to propose that when individuals have high quality connections (HQCs) in the workplace, it can increase their vitality and act as a key mechanism to energise them and give them a “sense of being eager to act and capable of action” (Dutton, 2003 as cited by Kark, 2011 p.432). High quality connections in a workplace engenders exchange relationships and helpful behaviours that allows an individual feel part of the organisation (Mossholder et al., 2011).

As heedful relating is the third agentic behaviour it recognises that individuals spend the majority of their time at work so for thriving to be fully accomplished individuals should interrelate with each other. Heedful relating promotes deeper social connections, individuals look out for others and recognise their interdependence, increasing the individual’s learning and vitality as the interaction allows the

individual to learn how their job fits with that of others, which in turn generates vitality as it provides social and psychological support (Spreitzer et al., 2013; Spreitzer et al., 2005). By fostering these types of relationships, organisations can arm employees with positive emotions, such as self-assurance, that allow them to act with confidence. These feelings then may contribute to a generative process whereby employees drive innovation, capitalise on flexibility, enhance performance and so become proactive participants in the organisation.

When individuals work effectively with others at work towards common goals, they are likely to experience heightened levels of energy which positively relates to the vitality element of the T@W model (Abid et al., 2016; Paterson et al., 2014). Spreitzer et al. (2011), when reviewing the inter-disciplinary literature surrounding human energy and the interlinkage with organisations, found that energy and vitality are important to heedful relating in two main ways, energy generation in a relationship and energy brought to a relationship: Firstly, energy generation (vitality) is a consequence (by-product) of a successful interaction, (Collins, 1993 as cited by Spreitzer et al., 2011), which in turn can increase an individual's feeling of self-worth, being valued, leading them to feel empowered and give a feeling of growth (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003, as cited by Spreitzer et al., 2011). Engaging in relational activities energises employees (Fritz et al., 2011; Shefer, Carmeli & Cohen-Meitar, 2017), and when this involves the giving of help it can act as a buffer for emotional exhaustion (Uy et al., 2017), and can be efficacious in recovering from resource loss (Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005; Spreitzer et al., 2005; Spreitzer et al., 2011). When the actions are done autonomously, are self-determined, it gives an individual a sense of self, which is quite distinct from when there is pressure to perform citizenship behaviours (Uy et al., 2017). However, Spitzmuller and Van Dyne (2013) found that it was the motivation for helping that was of importance as individual proactive helper is performing relational activities to self-benefit in terms of improved reputation and personal well-being.

Secondly, Spreitzer et al. (2011) cited the research of Quinn (2007) that linked the energy brought to a relationship with the quality of the interactions and the outputs generated. This aspect being especially important in an organisational context as energisers, as opposed to de-energisers, have a greater density of relationships that

evolve from higher levels of information exchange and performance (Baker & Quinn, 2009 as cited by Spreitzer et al., 2011). These proactive individuals in a relational environment create positive conditions and opportunities at work (Jiang, 2017). The extrovert part of their nature means they are more likely to receive social support from others, perhaps as a result of having larger social networks, but also because they are more likely (than introverts) to give support and this is then reciprocated, positively influencing their satisfaction with their social relationships (Bowling, Beehr & Swader, 2005; Lopes, Salovey & Straus, 2003, as cited by Bono et al., 2011).

2.4 Resources

Within the T@W model certain resources are required that are both environmental and individual which act as a support to the individual to cope with job demands, attain career goals, and achieve personal development (Weigl et al., 2010). By working agentically endogenous resources can be created in the process of doing work (Vogel & Bruch, 2011; Spreitzer et al., 2005). These internal resources in the initial model included knowledge, positive meaning, positive affective resources and relational resources, with psychological capital added to the model later following the research of Paterson et al. (2014). They are seen as flexible and changeable depending of the circumstance, and when they are produced they fuel further agentic behaviour and sustain thriving, coming together to create amplifying cycles and positive spirals, increasing job engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009; Sekerka, Vacharkulksemsuk, & Fredrickson, 2011).

Knowledge allows individuals to understand what and who is important, and where to obtain further information (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Individuals can then use their knowledge to gain a more integrated picture of their work situation. Acquiring new knowledge aids an individual's task focus, and by exploration expanding their existing knowledge range by investigation or observation, undertaking actions beyond their narrow job remit, leading to a better collective understanding of the organisation (Boyd, 2015). Task focus, and this wider contextual understanding, facilitates positive meaning as it gives a sense of purpose to what is being carried out, and why, which can lead to intrinsic motivation as individuals see their task as

meaningful. In the face of adversity individuals who have positive meaning “Reappraise an event as an opportunity, rather than a loss”, empowering them to work exploratorily with others to find solutions to problems (Niessen et al., 2012), leading to a greater sense of inter-dependency (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Individuals who experience positive meaning in the morning have increased feelings of learning and vitality at the end of the workday, showing that positive meaning, through task focus and exploration, affects both components of the model, learning and vitality (Niessen et al., 2012).

Having a positive emotional state generates positive affective resources which can fuel agentic behaviours. Organisational environments can facilitate thriving by fostering a relational context with a focus on personal connections (Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2017). These high-quality connections between individuals in the workplace result in more task focus, as information and ideas are shared so individuals can learn from each other, and it creates an atmosphere of psychological safety in which to explore and experiment with new ideas (Carmeli et al., 2009; Niessen et al., 2012). Increasing awareness of task requirements generates positive emotions, such as feelings of joy, contentment, gratitude, hope and peace (Fredrickson 2003: Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005 as cited by Spreitzer et al., 2005). These emotions allow individuals to address tasks with additional energy and enhanced creativity (Spreitzer et al., 2005) and promote heedful relating as individuals are inclined to look out for each other, express positive emotions towards each other, and provide relational resources (Boyd, 2015; Vinarski-Peretz, Binyamin, & Carmeli, 2011). Positive human connections not only reduce stress, but also promote trust, bonding, and well-being, with effective co-worker support potentially acting as a buffer for employees from experiencing burnout (Porath, 2011; Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009; Spreitzer et al., 2012). Even when an individual does not have the right skill-set to assist colleagues with their tasks the individual can still “help” his or her co-workers through expressions of kindness and concern (Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2017), and this altruistic behaviour at work correlates to positive moods later (Glombs et al 2011 as cited by Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2017).

Spreitzer et al. (2005) proposed that when specific work environments and relational resources enhance the sense of agency experienced by individual employees, it

ultimately results in individual growth, learning, and vitality. Paterson et al. (2014) studied full time employees and their supervisors, across several industries in different working environments, testing the relationship between two of the agentic behaviours from the T@W model, task focus and heedful relating, with psychological capital. The study found that psychological capital was an antecedent to thriving as these positive resources, of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism, lead to a positive appraisal of a role or task that encourages agentic behaviours. When individuals undertake tasks and explorations with an expectation of success, both at an individual and collective level it can lead to significantly higher levels of agentic work behaviours and thus contributes to thriving at work (Paterson et al., 2014).

2.5 Contextual features

Increasingly organisations operate in a fast-paced environment where tasks are complex and involve elements of uncertainty (Parker et al., 2013 as cited by Gerbasi, Porath, Parker, Spreitzer, & Cross, 2015). The changing nature of work corresponds to a need to shift the way work design and motivational mechanisms are conceptualised. Contextual features are a key antecedent to the agentic behaviours in the T@W model. Influencing an individual to thrive as it can act as either a stimulus that promotes thriving or diminishes it (Spreitzer et al., 2012). In climates that show a sense of appreciation and respect, providing opportunities for growth and development, then individuals are more likely to thrive (Spreitzer et al., 2005). These climates are typically characterised by contextual features that include the provision of autonomy in decision-making, communication of organisation strategy, developmental feedback for personal growth and goal achievement, fosters inclusion, and curtails disrespect (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Porath et al. (2012) found that when organisations focus on the contextual features that are embedded in the T@W model, not only does thriving increase, but also performance, organisational citizenship, leading to a corresponding reduction in health costs. Spreitzer & Cameron (2012), state that ‘a positive business can be defined by both its means and ends’ (p.87). Positive organisations do good by its employees and do well in terms of its outcomes resulting in thriving individuals who have an increased work performance (Boyd, 2015; Gerbasi et al., 2015; Porath et al., 2012), which

collectively is reflected in the work team's performance positively correlating with organisational performance (Cole, Bruch, & Vogel, 2012).

Initially antecedents of the T@W model included decision-making discretion, broad information sharing, climate of trust and respect, with supervisor support added following the research of Paterson et al. (2014). Nilsson (2015) supporting the earlier work of Spreitzer et al. (2012; 2013), suggested that organisations have moved away from traditional cultures which were characterised by independent employees aiming to display perfect competence, to a more positive collective culture, embracing a safe environment for exploration and experimentation, where an increase in knowledge can be seen as expanding an individual's and organisation's capacity. Spreitzer et al. (2012) suggested that when organisations focus on up to four of the contextual features from the T@W model then thriving of organisational members can increase by 42%.

2.5.1 Decision-making autonomy

Decision-making discretion is the most powerful antecedents for thriving (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2013). It encourages thriving as it is the satisfaction of a psychological need and is the strongest predictor of energy as autonomy gives individuals a sense of choice, control over what they do and how, and creates opportunities to learn (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Spreitzer et al. (2013) found that when individuals experience autonomy there were higher levels of performance on subsequent self-controlled activities than when the activities were controlled by external forces. For some individuals when they feel that they can influence events and outcomes it may predispose them to thrive as it impacts on an individual's willingness to act agentically (Porath et al., 2012).

2.5.2 Broad information sharing

Contextual features have a direct and indirect impact on individuals but are dependent on the level of perceived organisational support. Madden, Mathias, & Madden (2015) and Abid et al. (2016) found a direct relationship between organisational culture and intention to leave an organisation as individuals interpret contextual features of information sharing, performance feedback, a climate of trust and respect, as signals of organisational support. In cultures featuring high employee

involvement, individuals have a heightened sense of self-determination, freedom from organisational constraints and pressures helping them meet their fundamental human needs at work and personal goals (Wallace et al., 2016).

A culture of information sharing fuels thriving as it enables learning and allows the individual to visualise how they contribute to the organisation as a whole, (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Positive contextual features are antecedents for and predictors of thriving (Porath et al., 2011; Spreitzer et al., 2013), that positively relate to thriving at both the individual and group level (Wallace et al., 2016). The exchange of information between co-workers can increase obligations through indebtedness, but to be effective the information needs to be of high quality, aligned to tasks, and from individuals with high cognitive ability (Farh, Lanaj, & Ilies, 2017), otherwise it leads to negative effects, especially if it is not autonomous, or is excessive, or which can lead to feelings associated with a lack of competence or seen as self-threatening (Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2017; Uy et al., 2017), or results in role overload which lessens an individual's ability to thrive (Cullen, Gerbasi, & Chrobot-Mason, 2015).

2.5.3 Positive relationships

Positive relationships are a key resource in connection to employee turnover, as positive relations in the workplace have a mediating effect between the organisation and intent to leave (Abid, et al., 2016; Madden et al., 2015). Leaders, by encouraging positive relationships in the workplace amongst co-workers, give individuals opportunities to grow and positively heightens their commitment to the organisation, as it fulfils social and emotional needs such as relatedness and support, which in-turn can stimulate feelings of belonging, helping the individual to identify with their organisational role and purpose, and contributes to team members' sense of purpose and meaning through work. This description of relationships resonates with the T@W model's heedful relating behaviour and relational resources. Gerbasi et al. (2015) found thriving can buffer any negative effects from "de-energising" relationships, as it is a self-adaptive model that helps individuals to become active agents in shaping their work context to promote their own development (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Helping the individual to be self-aware, and with their energy, to prioritise their work to achieve their goals quicker (Schipper & Hogenes, 2011).

Within an organisation some relationships can be hard for the individual to sever, especially at team level, yet if issues go unaddressed by those involved it can negatively impact on the agentic behaviours of the model, as individuals use excess energy to contain emotions and have difficulty focusing on their work (Gerbasi et al., 2015). In a work environment, employees often work closely with one other, these dyads can occur at any level in the organisation and across levels, meaning dyadic relationships have to be resilient (Thompson & Ravlin, 2017). To have sustainable and thriving dyads in a growing organisation the two individuals must have the capacity, confidence, and willingness, to change in line with the organisation. Learning from each other through reflection and feedback, and with an incentivisation to craft their roles to create a synergistic relationship (Thompson & Ravlin, 2017), this requires a culture of openness, empathy and reflection based on interpersonal commitment and trust, thereby adding to the resources of the dyad (Farh et al., 2017; Spreitzer et al., 2011). However, leaders need to be proactive in utilising discretion when creating dyads, recognising that people who identify with each other are more likely to heedfully relate, are more likely to forgive each other's transgressions which adds a strength to the dyad moving forward (Thompson & Ravlin, 2017). Leaders need to be aware that to create successful dyads the individuals themselves will be relinquishing some independence and autonomy, so support may be required. With autonomy and decision-making effectively moving from the individual level to the dyad level.

2.5.4 Trust and respect

A climate of trust and respect can influence thriving directly and indirectly (Carmeli et al., 2009; Rogers, Corley & Ashforth, 2017). Trust in one's employer creates a psychological contract that improves generative relationships with colleagues, increasing vitality, augmenting positive feelings and emotions towards work engagement and heedful relating, affecting the psychological state of the individual. There is also an indirect relationship between trust and thriving through connectivity, and between connectivity and innovative behaviours, with innovation increasing when individuals feel they are psychologically safe and have support from colleagues (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009; Riaz, Xu & Hussain, 2018). How individuals relate to each other is a sign of trust, so civility in organisational environments is an important contextual feature to facilitate thriving. Whilst trust and respect can bring

positive results, the more uncivil the environment, the more stressed the employees (Porath, 2011).

A civil and respectful climate is thought to be an enabling context for work because individuals can master challenges (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Whereas, when organisational leaders allow a climate of incivility to occur individuals are less likely to believe that they are valued organisational members. This can lead to a number of adverse consequences both for individuals and their organisation, as individuals do not foster a sense of belonging or inclusion, leading them to reduce organisational citizenship behaviours, narrowing their focus to the task at hand, avoiding risks that might have otherwise have offered an opportunity to learn, not disclosing important aspects of who they are or their ideas which may be of high value to an organisation (Spreitzer et al., 2012; Porath et al., 2012). This risk aversion is a result of the individual not being able to be their authentic self at work which deters thriving and reduces vitality as it can be a drain on an individual cognitively, emotionally and physically (Spreitzer et al., 2005).

In contrast, Porath (2011) found those who work in civil places reported having 26 % more energy, were 30 % more likely to feel motivated about learning new ideas and skills and 30% more likely to feel vital and energetic, were also 36 % more satisfied with their jobs, and 44% more committed to their organisations, leading them to have higher performance ratings relative to others in the organisation, with the researcher concluding that working in a civil atmosphere can increase motivation, energy, learning, and enthusiasm for the organisation, in part due to the fact that acts of civility can spur positive emotions, either consciously or unconsciously. The earlier research of Fredrickson (2001, as cited by Porath, 2011) in her broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions saw civility as broadening an individual's thought-action repertoire and expanding their mind-set which can be used for the exploration of novel or creative ideas. The act of exploration can stimulate positive feelings of self and toward others which generates further energy to contribute and engage with others in the organisation (Porath & Pearson, 2010), with individuals more inclined to act in the company's best interests and to trust others, helping them to thrive (Edmundson, 1999 as cited by Porath, 2011 and Spreitzer et al., 2005). Thriving individuals may give back to the organisation

through a desire to increase knowledge and through organisational citizenship which encourages them to go above and beyond (Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2017), and produce strong interpersonal relationships (Farh et al., 2017). These aspects are less easily quantifiable in terms of the financial bottom line but produce results that are clearly beneficial to organisations (Porath, 2011). Mzid, Khachlouf & Soparnot (2018) when studying family-based businesses found trust to be a prevalent feature which helped them to be more resilient during times of change as the individuals could draw on strong trusted relationships to build their resources and enhance their innovative and creative qualities to move the businesses forward and overcome hurdles.

In 2012, Spreitzer et al. suggested that diversity was an extension of trust and respect. Climates of trust, respect, which supported diversity create safe havens for individuals to be their authentic selves (Zhu, Law, Sun & Yang, 2018), increasing their learning from their willingness to try new things and share their experience and knowledge with others and so enhancing self-development and vitality. Spreitzer et al. (2012) found that when employees work with people globally it can promote a global identity and an individual's appreciation for differences, trust and inclusion, this supports employees' thriving as it encourages learning from a variety of thought, ideas and viewpoints, leading to increased problem solving, exploration and innovation important in a diverse, global economy and from a range of diverse, intercultural social contacts (Rozkwitalska, 2018).

2.5.5 Supervisor support

The management of the organisational climate is an important aspect for positive organisations, and in 2014 following the work of Paterson et al. supervisor support was included in the contextual features as an antecedent to thriving. Paterson et al. (2014) researched thriving across a number of industries and found a climate that includes supportive supervisor enhances thriving as they show concern for their employees' well-being creating a safe environment in which to work. This psychological safety makes employees feel vital (Kark & Carmeli, 2009), and they act more agentically through increased exploration and heedful relating, (Fraizer & Tupper, 2018; Paterson et al., 2014). This perceived state of psychological safety for employees is indirectly enhanced when supervisors are prosocial and thriving themselves, as the supervisor is more concerned about benefitting others over

themselves and are better placed to understand the values and perspectives of others (Frazier & Tupper, 2018). In dynamic environments, it is not feasible to control through regulation as individuals often work in teams requiring collaboration, innovation, and flexibility, to complete projects, so this more supportive role is required (Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2017).

Supervisor support is particularly found to be crucial in turbulent times when thriving could suffer amidst upheaval and change, resulting in uncertainty if competencies are questioned, lowering cognitive and psychological resources (Spreitzer et al., 2013). For individuals this turbulence can either be in the workplace or in their family life. Change can threaten an individual's perceived identity but supervisors can help manage the process by showing support and understanding, helping the employee to develop in the face of the challenge and improve their self-image, adapting it to suit the evolving organisation, team or role (Ashforth, Schinoff, & Rogers, 2016; Roberts et al., 2005). Where an individual has external pressures having a family supportive supervisor allows the individual to experience greater work-family enrichment and feel more psychologically safe through a deeper, meaningful relationship between themselves and their supervisor (Paterson et al., 2014; Russo, Buonocore, Carmeli, & Guo, 2018).

2.6 Practical implications for a growing organisation

2.6.1 Selection processes for leadership

As organisations grow there needs to be a reduction in the over-reliance on the owner-manager. Farh et al. (2017) found when teams were composed of individuals with high cognitive ability there was a positive relationship between team member exchanges and performance. The management or supervisor teams are often central in small growing organisations, so their recruitment, retention and thriving are of high importance (Cullen et al., 2015). How individuals respond positively to change can be of importance to all organisations, but more so in growing organisations as there is likely to be regular and constant change. The selection of individuals with a protean career attitude and the correct outlook will be of importance. Those seeing their role as a practice to be learnt will lead them to have a higher level of communal identity, are more likely to thrive and stay with the organisation (Schabram &

Maitlis, 2017), allowing the organisation to benefit from their vitality (Fritz et al. 2011) and take advantage of their creativity and innovation for longer (Baruch et al., 2014).

Selecting individuals into roles with management responsibilities who have positive self-evaluation traits and demonstrate key attributes such as the ability to listen, empathy, and persuasion it can increase thriving by role modelling (Walumbwa et al., 2017), increasing collective thriving, leading to a work-force more willing and able to show initiative and take an active role in improving performance (Seibert et al. 2011, as cited by Walumbwa et al., 2017). However, selecting promotion-focussed, motivated individuals who want to learn and move forward can result in the recruitment of individuals who feel energised by the work they do (Uy et al., 2017), who calibrate their role through job crafting in the context of a changing work environment. However, the dark side of competitiveness in promotion focused individuals needs to be avoided, where individuals work for self-interest rather than a broader motivation. This requires social derived outcomes and good citizenship behaviours to be embedded in to their roles to support thriving for all (Frazier & Tupper, 2018; Plouffe & Gregoire, 2011).

2.6.2 *Work environment*

At an individual level, when leaders develop a culture that emphasises the contextual features from the T@W model it allows individuals to bring their best qualities to the organisation, (Porath et al., 2012). Thriving individuals had a better general health and well-being, less strain and lower levels of burnout (Porath et al., 2012). Even small positive events associated with the thriving, such as positive feedback, goal accomplishment, relationships in workplace, are directly related to improved health and act as a buffer to reduce the impact of negative events (Bono, Glomb, Shen, Kim, & Koch, 2013). This section looks at thriving at work in relation to burnout and absenteeism, role and job stressors, leadership, meaning and autonomy.

2.6.3 *Burnout and absenteeism*

In part, thriving individuals can counter burnout in times of high expectation due to their high levels of energy, engagement, and desire to create a positive future for the organization as well as their own personal and professional future (Porath &

Spreitzer, 2012). At an organisation level Porath et al. (2012) found a culture that allows individuals to thrive can be positive in terms of the following outcomes: thriving employees had 16-21% higher total performance, 125% less burnout than co-workers who were not thriving, 32% had higher organisational commitment, 46% had higher job satisfaction, and thriving employees had higher productivity, reduced health care costs, and less absenteeism (Porath et al., 2012). Work absenteeism and employee turnover are costly financially and non-financially to organisations. Thriving individuals benefit from positive health from the learning they undertake and improved mental health from increased vitality (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2013; Spreitzer et al., 2012). The work of Spreitzer et al. (2012) found thriving individuals in their sample reported 74 less sick days over the research period and the individuals' better health contributed to sustained performance and increased job satisfaction relative to non-thrivers. When both components of the model operated together an individual's performance was rated 15% higher than those individuals where only one component was at a high level (Spreitzer et al., 2013). Schaufeli et al. (2009) broke absenteeism down into two aspects which the model could help to reduce, namely "absence duration" and "absence frequency". When resources are available absence duration is linked to burnout, as job demands are too high, with absence frequency due to a lack of job resources and less job demands which ultimately leads to burnout, due to a negative impact on motivation and performance as it undermines learning opportunities hampering the ability to thrive. This insight allows managers to categorise absenteeism and address the underlying cause, showing support for the individual, investing in their well-being and helping them move up the positivity spiral. It was not sufficient just to reduce job demands, organisations needed to provide resources to "increase the motivational potential of employees and enhance work engagement" (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

2.6.4 Role and job stressors

Even when there is no absenteeism there could be presenteeism when individuals present themselves at work but are not thriving and have no engagement. For thriving to take place both the resources and the contextual features must be in place, it was not sufficient just to remove work stressors, as "thriving is not cultivated simply by decreasing stressors" (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p.539). Individuals under stress don't learn as well and tend to withdraw from their jobs psychologically and

physically (Porath, 2011). How an individual negotiates challenges at work and make sense of those challenges can have significant effect on how they are affected by them (Schabram & Maitlis, 2017), especially as challenges can get amplified over time (Spreitzer et al., 2012), or there is a lack of organisational support as it can leave the individual drained and at a collective level can lead to a non-thriving workforce (Spreitzer et al., 2005).

When individuals can see where they fit in the organisation and take on a learning approach to work, they are able to see the 'bigger picture', crafting new roles in the face of change (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001 as cited by Schabram & Maitlis, 2017). Individuals will try to humanise their work by changing their tasks, boundaries, interactions, how they think about their work and the meaning of their work. When employees interpret a challenge as hindering them from achieving their goals or impeding their growth, negative emotions are evoked (Porath & Pearson, 2010). In the modern workplace time pressure and learning demands are seen as two challenge stressors for individuals (Prem et al., 2017). Sonnentag and Niessen (2008) found in their diary study the additional energy required to deal with high levels of time pressure led to lower vitality even after work, so it is important for individuals to have a true recovery, as individuals with less vitality have limited energy to engage in decision-making and have ineffective relational interactions. Organisations that allow individuals to adapt and be proactive in response to a challenge, positive emotions and beneficial reactions can result.

When Prem et al. (2017) carried out their diary study, of 124 employees over a five-day period, it was expected that time pressure and learning demands would be differentially related to the two components of thriving, being positively related to learning and negatively related to vitality. However, their results showed it was the levels of these two stressors that were important. A challenge of additional time pressure and learning demands had a positive effect for learning, but no effect on vitality. Whereas, higher levels of learning demands acted as a hindrance impeding vitality but had no effect on learning. Spreitzer et al. (2012) had earlier suggested that there was a tipping point when learning was not accompanied by vitality during tasks, after which performance declined and the learning led to work overload, so both components must be in existence for thriving to take place. Korunka, Kubicek, Paškvan, & Ulferts, (2015) distinguished between the level of learning and job

demands. They concluded intensified learning acted as a job resource, with a positive relationship with job satisfaction and a negative relationship with future emotional energy. Whereas, increasing job demands, social and work-specific challenges, had a positive correlation to emotional exhaustion and negatively to job satisfaction. In line with this, Prem et al. (2017) concluded that when individuals assess their workday time pressure was deemed a hindrance, but it had no subsequent impact on learning or vitality.

2.6.5 Leadership

Leaders play a central role and their behaviour has a significant impact on work behaviour, performance and well-being (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, (2009) as cited by Inceoglu et al., 2018). Leaders need to build organisations that are sustainable, strong and nimble so they can face the challenges of the future. Thriving leaders can help facilitate thriving organisations as the vitality generated when individuals are thriving can be contagious which can positively affect others, creating positive spirals for employees, organisations and others around them (Spreitzer et al., 2012; Weigl et al., 2010). Research in 2012, by Spreitzer et al., found thriving leaders were rated 17% higher than those who reported low levels of thriving, concluding that thriving is important to a leader's effectiveness, as subordinates regard them as role models of how work is done. Inceoglu et al. (2018), identified five main ways in which leadership behaviour can mediate affective employee well-being, both hedonic and eudaimonic, with many of the components overlapping with contextual features and resources of the T@W model. These include social signalling as this can influence an employee's self-efficacy, skills perception, their perception of fit within the organisational culture and gives psychological empowerment. Through job design an employee can achieve more meaning from their role and the setting of realistic goals allows the employee to self-develop. The leader's mood can affect employees which can impact their well-being including their ability to thrive at work, engage in their work and their level of emotional exhaustion. By engaging with social exchanges with employees the leader sets the psychological climate for the organisation and demonstrates the level of trust and social support amongst organisational members. Finally, the behaviour of the leader can help employees identify with the organisation, their team and their job. Leaders who seek opportunities to take the initiative, enable others to act, are

empowering, and importantly have an inherent energy that gravitates people to them. When leaders themselves are thriving they are apt to enable thriving in employees (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2013), which at an organisational level can impact positively on employee satisfaction, well-being and employee turnover (Abid et al., 2016; Nel et al., 2015), resulting in thriving at work positively relating to collective emotional commitment and overall organisational performance (Walumbwa et al., 2017).

For leaders of organisations their style of leadership can help their employees to thrive. Mishra & Mishra, (2011) quoted Cameron (2008) who stated that positive leaders focus on enabling “positively deviant performance, foster an affirmative orientation in organizations, and engender a focus on virtuousness” p.452. Positive leadership styles, for example authentic or transformational leadership styles, encourage leaders to promote the individual and organisation, emphasise their positive attributes and have supportive forms of communication with their subordinates (Spreitzer & Cameron, 2012). Nilsson (2015) drew on positive organisational behaviour theory and in particular the work of Luthans & Avolio, 2003, describing authentic “leaders as those who act in alignment with their genuine self”, demonstrate positive personality traits like hope, confidence, and optimism. Leaders of organisations tend to be more extrovert in their nature, characterised as highly competent and visionary individuals with the drive, fortitude and stamina, along with courageous endurance, and who approach problems assertively (Martin and Osberg, 2007 as cited by Steckler and Waddock, 2018). They have a large social network from which they can access resources and positive relationships and this then helps create a positive energy reinforcing individual’s strengths (Bono, et al., 2011), and helps them overcome organisational obstacles and setbacks, (Bullough and Renko, 2013, as cited by Steckler and Waddock, 2018).

Perceived authentic leadership has a positive relationship with both components of the T@W model, learning and vitality (Mortier, Vlerick, & Clays, 2016). When leaders demonstrate positive attributes, they can also increase their own thriving from enhanced growth by giving and receiving information and guidance, conferring with team members and thereby relating to them, helping others thrive by giving them discretion over their time, decision-making authority, increased autonomy and

self-determination (Bono et al., 2011). They instil in their subordinates a sense of commitment and pride in their work, promoting thriving by creating safe environments for exploration, encouraging open dialogue and information sharing, empathise with others which can generate an energy or zest, (Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Onorato & Zhu, 2014), thereby developing positive relationships and positive meaning that allow positive leaders to focus on positive deviant behaviours even in negative environments (Mishra & Mishra, 2011).

In periods of growth leaders may have to adapt to a transformational leadership style which can aid thriving by creating a vision and guiding change through inspiration. This can be both challenging and supportive, and can help foster learning and vitality by satisfying individuals through their influence on tasks and social characteristics of the work environment, providing goals and learning opportunities which add meaning to their work (Niessen et al., 2017) and support an individual's thriving (Paterson et al., 2014). Whilst transformational leadership can positively influence affective states in some individuals for others it can be energy draining (Bono & Ilies, 2006, as cited by Niessen et al., 2017). For individuals with high levels of energy resources a transformational leader can aid thriving as more resources and opportunities are available to further their learning giving them a sense of advancement, but for others with lower levels of energy this leadership style can cause strain trying to put the leaders vision into action (Hildenbrand, Sacramento & Binnewies, 2018; Niessen et al., 2017). In these circumstances, energy resources will act as a boundary in the promotion of thriving.

Sensitivity to relational dynamics in an organisation increases the bonds between organisational members and has trust at its foundation (Hirak, Carmeli, Peng, & Schaubroeck, 2010 as cited by Kark, 2011). Leaders are critical when building trust in organisations, and that trust in the leader is significantly related to a number of positive attitudes, behaviours, and performance outcomes, including job performance and job satisfaction, while being negatively related to intention to quit (Mishra & Mishra, 2011). When individuals are attached to a team these outcomes can extend to affective commitment (Walumbwa et al., 2017) and organisational citizen behaviours that enhance organisational relational capital. Trust in organisations is between the leader and their employees and between co-employees. The leader-

follower relationships are multifaceted, complex and often dynamic, in which both parties can mutually benefit, creating a “virtuous trust circle” based on leadership characteristics of courage, authenticity, and humility. These enable leaders to demonstrate trustworthiness by showing compassion, reliability, openness and competence, supporting individual outcomes that influence an individual’s ability to thrive and create a culture of trust (Kark, 2011; Mishra & Mishra, 2011). A strong leader-follower relationship can extend heedful relating in an organisation with employees motivated to enhance the well-being of the leader, through a willingness to co-operate with the leader and commitment to him or her (Kark and Shamir, 2002, as cited by Kark 2011).

As social animals, individuals yearn to belong, so a feeling of a sense of community within an organisation is often what makes the difference when creating a workplace based on trust. Prioritising connection at work means valuing relationships enough to devote time during worktime to foster them, with the organisation’s leaders supporting and prioritising the cultivation of individual and collective growth. Both aspects of the T@W model can be affected by collaborative working and growth. Vitality can increase when energy resources are given and received to/from co-workers, such as positive emotions and a sense of meaning (Fritz et al., 2011). Learning can also take place when individuals are being exploratory or working collaboratively with others. Spreitzer et al. (2005) argued that individuals should be mindful in developing and cultivating networks with positive, energising interactions as this adds meaning and provides resources that are critical to a sense of thriving at work. Leaders of organisations can be instrumental in this, as they can provide the tools to help individuals influence their own network by creating an environment that encourages interactions and team work. To be successful, a laissez-faire approach to networking cannot be taken, as creating and maintaining meaningful networks can be challenging for individuals who work in dynamic, stressful environments, as they have little spare capacity other than balancing between work, their immediate co-workers, and family (Spreitzer et al., 2012), and so the individual must be intent on building these networks to help maintain their long-term thriving.

2.6.6 *Meaning and autonomy*

Alignment to a high-level purpose contributes to a positive organisational culture by providing positive meaning for the individual. To thrive, individuals need to see their contributions as significant, aligned with their personal values, having a long-lasting impact, built on supportive relationships between individuals that are bonded by a common cause (Cameron, 2008, as cited by Mishra & Mishra 2011). Leaders can have a tremendous influence on thriving through helping to create a sense of meaning and purpose through work (Fritz et al., 2011). By setting a tone in the organisation that is respectful and collegial, and providing decision-making discretion, thriving can be enhanced as individuals feel more aligned with the organisation and those around them, exploration increases, and individuals do their best to seek for new solutions to the problems they encounter (Spreitzer et al., 2005). This enables more mindful relating between leaders and their team as meaning is created regarding the collective team (Spreitzer et al., 2005) contributing to a positive organisational culture.

Allowing individuals to create an identity at work and job craft can increase their personal meaning by having congruence between their beliefs, values, behaviours at work, so energising them as they seek to maintain this. However, for leaders of organisations they must ensure that this crafting is aligned to the mission of the organisation to achieve operational goals and secure the development of employees' personal and professional resources in a sustainable manner and creating resources for the future (Kira & Balkin, 2014). An organisation's purpose and objectives are often portrayed in their mission and value statements. When these are live documents in an organisation it can create positive meaning for the employee as they can see how their role is aligned to the mission of the organisation. A leader can deepen positive meaning, firstly by offering employees the autonomy to pursue their own passions and missions within the framework of corporate goals, to facilitate their conviction and engagement with their work, and secondly, by taking the time to share strategic corporate information. This knowledge, the sharing of goals and performance indicators, can show everyone in the organisation how they are living and working in alignment the top priorities and values of the organisation (Spreitzer et al., 2012; Spreitzer & Porath, 2012). The sharing of information gives individuals an understanding that allows them to respond effectively when faced with new or

challenging situations, integrating their actions, and collaborating with others in the organisation. With this approach thriving can be increased, as individuals learn from being exploratory when problem-solving, so increasing positive meaning and knowledge, and increasing relational resources during collaboration.

When these communications are positive it can create a positive work environment. Cameron (2008, as cited by Mishra & Mishra 2011) found that a high-performance team in a positive organisation provided more positive than negative comments to team members, increasing organisational performance, by contributing to a sense of connectivity and trust among team members. At an individual level, positive leaders provide feedback that focuses on an individual's strengths which relates to their job performance and organisational citizenship (Spreitzer et al., 2012), and in doing so create positive meaning for the individual, contributing to their well-being by encouraging positive behaviours that support their development and work performance by giving them opportunities to develop their strengths through greater autonomy, decision-making discretion, information sharing (Nel et al., 2015). Leaders who identify and develop an individual's strengths help them to learn and reach their full potential, enabling them to grow, have energy and passion, by allowing them to take control of their own work and development which aligns with the definition of thriving suggested by Spreitzer et al. (2005). With a focus on strengths rather than weaknesses energising an individual to better performance (Clifton, 2013; Mishra & Mishra, 2011) and leads to increased employee engagement (Asplund & Blacksmith, 2011).

Early critiques of positive psychology included concern that the approach would ignore problems and may be inappropriately applied and result in employees' goodwill being exploited, leading to an undermining of their well-being in the long-term (Roberts, 2006). However, Asplund & Blacksmith, (2011) suggest that when a leader takes an interest in an employee it gives that employee a sense that someone cares about him at work, helps him develop authentically which gives him a sense of progression, then the employee is likely to pay back this attention with increased work ethic, enthusiasm and commitment. However, too much trust by a leader for some individuals lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout (Baer et al. 2015 as cited by Inceoglu et al., 2018).

2.7 Relationship between thriving at work and outside of work

A dimension of the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) is vitality, of which energy is a main component, this helps fuel the smooth running of the organisation making energy management an important aspect of an individual's life that positively contributes to their thriving, with energy management strategies taking different forms, inside and outside the organisation (Fritz et al., 2011; Hahn, Binnewies & Haun, 2012; Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008; Steckler & Waddock, 2018). As individuals spend a significant number of hours at work this section looks at the research on how thriving at work can impact an individual's life outside of work and vice versa, with the viewpoints from the theorists in this area being closely aligned with those on energy. Firstly, conservationists suggest, when individuals hold multiple roles it can be energy depleting, so individuals become protective of this resource to conserve their energy (Hobfoll, 1989 as cited by Weigl et al., 2010).

Whereas, Spreitzer et al. (2012) and Porath et al. (2012) take an expansionists' viewpoint and suggest that when a person is in a positive state in one role it can spill-over to the other with individuals having the ability to thrive in both contexts, work and non-work, even when individuals see these as distinct contexts. When individuals feel competent, have high levels of job satisfaction, feel challenged by their work the experience can be invigorating and not depleting, allowing individuals to feel alive at work and home (Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007). However, role overload in either or both contexts would focus energy resources in that area, resulting in limited spill-over and potential for burnout (Keeney & Ilies, 2011).

Baruch et al. (2014) considered career success in relation to professional vitality and career satisfaction across differing work environments and used conservation of resources (COR) theory, (Hobfoll, 2002 as cited by Baruch et al., 2014), to underpin the research. One of main principles of COR theory is that individuals attain and manage resources that they highly regard and value with the overall aim of maximising resources, whether it be physical, psychological, social, or organisational, to contribute to their general development and well-being. The theory claims that people with higher levels of resources will handle stressful situations and

resolve problems better than people with lower levels of resources. The availability of resources enables individuals to manage challenges and take advantage of opportunities, with the individuals utilising their inner personal values to select which resources to apply in order to cope with different situations and improve their well-being. As such, individuals are driven to maintain their current resources and to pursue new resources, with psychological stress occurring when there is a threat of loss of those resources, an actual net loss, or a perceived lack of gaining new resources following a spending of resources.

Spreitzer et al. (2005) saw thriving as a positive state, subjective and experiential, that varies overtime. When individuals work in an environment conducive to thriving it produces energy “spill-over” as individuals are engaging in more agentic behaviours and they are increasing their learning and vitality, allowing them to feel more satisfied with their job, returning home in a positive state (Wilson & Wagner, 2009, as cited by Keeney & Ilies, 2011). Positive events in the workplace can have both direct and indirect positive effects, as the positivity can buffer family-to-work conflict (Bono et al., 2013), as individuals can gauge their level of energy which helps them re-energise and thrive in both contexts. For engaged workers whilst they may feel tired after their work this is accompanied with a ‘pleasant’ state associated with accomplishment (Schaufeli, Taris & Bakker, 2006, as cited by Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011), with this positivity spilling-over to their out of work activities and aiding effective recovery from work, which then spills back into work leading to higher performance and reduced absenteeism (Keeney & Ilies, 2011, cited Weer, Greenhaus & Linnehan, 2010). Keeney & Ilies (2011) suggest that there is an interrelatedness of emotional states across contexts, being spill-over, transference of positive states and the sharing of positive events. Carmeli and Russo (2016) proposed a theoretical model that focused on work family enrichment and thriving which suggested that work-family enrichment can stimulate thriving by enhancing personal growth as individuals are mindful and motivated to learn to reach their potential and are held in positive regard by their managers and co-workers in their organisation, and by relatives in their home life. Zhang, Xu, Jin, and Ford (2018) when considering work-family enrichment concluded that organisations needed to consider family-friendly policies to help individuals balance work and family issues because work-family enrichment is significantly related to various kinds of

employees' outcomes such as organisational commitment, work engagement and in-role performance in both domains.

The following section considers energy resources during the working day (Fritz et al., 2011), in the evening (Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008), at weekends (Hahn et al., 2012) along with some of the types of recuperation techniques that research has found to be effective (Steckler & Waddock, 2018). Fritz et al. (2011) suggest that over time pressures deplete personal resources such as energy that are needed to conduct work and make progress towards a desired outcome. When there is a build-up of pressures, internal and external, if individuals do not have strategies that create or enhance their perseverance or resilience, or restore their energy, they could burnout, (Fritz et al., 2011).

Any energy or vitality brought to the workplace by the individual from non-work activities fades over time, so it is necessary for there to be methods of recovery in the workplace for human sustainability and to allow individuals to perform well. Fritz et al. (2011) found that individuals engaged in different activities depending on their desired outcome. When individuals were fatigued, they undertook physical activities with the hope of generating more energy and these activities tended to be drinking water, going to the bathroom, and having a snack. Whereas activities related to learning were more effective to increase overall vitality as these activities generate psychological resources, added meaning to the individual's work as it allows the individual to focus on what gives them joy at work leading to a release of energy, or creating positive workplace relationships that can provide psychological support, (Sonenshein, Dutton, Grant, Spreitzer, & Sutcliffe, 2013). By taking small actions individuals can boost themselves that elevate their capacity for action, protect and fortify them, especially when faced with challenging work environments that could otherwise deplete their psychological resources (Sonenshein et al., 2013).

From the research, "recovery" outside of work can be stimulated through participating in evening and weekend activities that provide rest and rejuvenation, (Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008). An individual's natural energy level can impact on their ability to recover. Whilst sleep restores physical energy it may not replenish emotional energy (Spreitzer, Fritz, & Lam, 2016 as cited by Uy et al., 2017).

Individuals who naturally have high levels of energy can use short periods of time with “moderate to high recovery experiences to retain vigour”, whereas those “with low scores do not benefit as much from recovery experiences”, for these individuals accumulated recovery time is required to gain increased vitality beyond just the replenishment of depleted energy resources (Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008). When individuals undertake positive unwinding experiences in the evenings it can help restore energy which results in higher levels of energy the following days. Specifically, experiences such as relaxation, mastery experiences, a sense of control, and psychological detachment from work have been found to be particularly beneficial for recovery (Fritz et al., 2011). Fritz et al. (2011) also suggested that positive weekend experiences were positively related to joviality and lower levels of fatigue at the end of the weekend.

Partners of thriving individuals appear to play an important role, both in terms of support for successful functioning in the workplace (Butterfield et al., 2010) and for recovery (Hahn et al., 2012). Hahn et al. (2012), suggested a link between weekend experiences and an individual’s well-being or emotional state. When individuals engaged in positive joint activities in their personal life there was an increase in positive emotional states, leading to an increase in positivity subsequently in the workplace, but the joint experience did not decrease negative emotional states. Whereas negative weekend experiences, such as conflict, were energy draining as resources were used for self-regulation, hampering the establishment of new resources, leading the authors to conclude, “negative weekend events increase negative states but do not decrease positive ones” (Hahn et al., 2012).

Considering energy replenishment practices using a positive organisational lens to focus on what activities individuals undertook to sustain themselves Steckler and Waddock (2018) looked the experiences of successful social entrepreneurs and what they did to sustain themselves in times of challenge. The researchers found that these individuals created retreats, which were intentionally crafted spaces that allow the individual to carry out intentional practices for short periods of time outside of their work setting which removed the individual from the day-to-day fray, (Steckler & Waddock, 2018). These can take the form of reflective, relational, and inspirational practices and are essential for enhancing personal well-being and sustaining the

individual through challenging work-related activities over time. Relational retreats that connect the individual to the bigger picture of which they were part of were found to be important to maintain resources to overcome obstacles and achieve success in their work (Steckler & Waddock, 2018). For both leaders and their employees, energy management becomes an important aspect in helping them have vitality at work. There is no single 'best practice' to manage energy resources inside or outside of the workplace, as each individual is unique, but it is important to recognise that when individuals undertake activities, particularly those associated with learning, it can add to their thriving.

2.8 Leadership development

The theories underpinning the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) can impact leadership development in how leaders are educated and add to the eco-system to support owner-managers as it highlights areas leaders should develop to create organisations in which they and their employees can thrive. Whilst traditional models of leadership education aim to assess competencies, offer challenges to close knowledge and skills gaps, then give support to aid development, a positive approach would assess strengths through positive jolts at crucial times which can result in a release of energy and through the development of relational support facilitating the growth of the owner-manager.

Whilst leaders will inherently have their own authentic style of leadership they may have to learn and develop new attributes as work contexts change, taking on a positive leadership style to help themselves, their employees, and their organisation thrive. Leaders of organisations need to continually learn and role craft to be able to adapt to changing circumstances as their organisations grow and face ever changing economic and social environments. This learning can positively increase the leaders own thriving and the outcomes positively impact their teams. Spreitzer et al. (2012) found that opportunities to innovate through learning new knowledge, or skills, enhances thriving, as does developing a new competency. One study, measuring thriving both prior to and after collaboration skills training, found participants had enhanced levels of thriving and were highly motivated to transfer the learning back to their organisations, leading Spreitzer et al. (2012) to suggest that those who thrive

acknowledge the need to continually learn either through training, taking on a new role, or seeking out learning and development on the job, to positively impact their level of thriving. Leaders tend to be more extrovert in nature, leading them to be more likely to engage in learning to achieve their goals by learning something new rather than a validation of their competence (Bono et al., 2013). Learning can take place both inside and outside the organisation, both informally and formally. Thriving is positively influenced by receiving positive affective resources from peers and team members (Spreitzer et al., 2011). Leaders of organisations need to give feedback to their employees, receive feedback, develop themselves and their employees so they have the skills to face future organisational challenges. Spreitzer, Stephens and Sweetman (2009) suggest one approach for development is using reflected best self-theory alongside the T@W model. The reflected best self-approach gives a framework for development of the leader whilst the T@W model can act as a gauge to understand the process of individual growth to give individuals “a sense if they are achieving progress in their growth and development” (Boyd, 2015; Paterson et al., 2014; Spreitzer et al., 2012).

The use of reflected best self would give the owner-manager more self-awareness of their identity now and where they would like to be in the future as their organisations grow, allowing them to develop as a leader and construct a new identity. The reflected best self is a positive approach to leadership development (Spreitzer, 2006) as it allows the leveraging of strengths to maximise the individual’s potential and increase awareness of those strengths. This approach would not ignore an individual’s perceived weaknesses, preferring leaders either develop those weaknesses to an acceptable level or manage around them by working with others with complementary strengths. A strength-based approach focuses on positive jolts to stimulate growth as they release energy in the individual making them more receptive to new ideas and learning, and in a group environment, such as classroom or work group, encourage individuals to co-create and support each other through building durable resources and high-quality connections. Thus, developing social capital which can be drawn on as organisations grow, from connections within the organisation or external, and from their educational cohorts and other networks (Spreitzer et al., 2009), reducing the negative effects for leaders when they

experience personal problems as they have a peer support mechanism (McDonald & Westphal, 2011).

As the organisation grows the leader will have to initiate change, face challenges, but using the reflected best self-approach will do so with a “heightened sense of agency and efficacy to move forward”. Those with high generalised self-efficacy are more likely to engage actively because they are more confident with their potential for success, and such engagement is likely to generate vitality and opportunities for learning, and ultimately thriving (Porath et al., 2012). From the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) it can be seen that there must be resources in place that will help fuel the engine of the model. Leaders will need these resources to thrive during their leadership development. A knowledge of their future self will help them craft their new role for their growing organisation, address any challenges creatively and share their vision for growth with their team. Crafting a new role can create increased meaning for the owner-manager, re-energise their sense of purpose, which could act as a catalyst for further growth in themselves and release positive emotions that are contagious to those around them.

For leaders of organisations feedback should be a two-way process. Both the receiving and giving of feedback can impact their learning about themselves and those they manage (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Providing negative feedback can be difficult and drains an individual’s vitality (Spreitzer et al., 2012) and when the negative feedback is given to individuals with low self-esteem it may be seen as a personal failing which subsequently impedes their learning and vitality (Porath et al., 2012), but with effective feedback positive resources can be generated from the negative events to help individuals learn and thrive in the future (Byrne & Shepherd, 2015; Marchiondo, Cortina, & Kabat-Farr, 2018). Research based on social information processing theory found that through social interactions with leader’s employees form beliefs about themselves and their work environment and developed the ability to acquire and build resources (Inceglu et al., 2018). Spreitzer et al. (2012) concluded that a more coaching focused approach to delivering feedback should be developed by leaders, this supportive leadership approach allows leaders to develop the ability to ask questions and listen, and not on telling, thereby having meaningful interactions. Leaders who learn to incorporate this approach into their leadership

style, can see an alignment of their personal and professional goals, with their employees' goals, and those of the organisation, which facilitates thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2012). For a leader, as with other individuals in the organisation, receiving feedback gives them an opportunity to gain a holistic view and appreciation of how they are perceived, identify growth opportunities, increase their self-awareness through reflection to create a self-portrait, and helps them track their development over time, reducing stress that can deter thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2012). In a study on an executive leadership program, that looked at feedback and coaching, the researchers found leaders had a significant shift in thriving by creating new awareness about their personal strengths and development opportunities, which gave them an energy and motivation to take personal action by reflecting on opportunities prompted by the program (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Leaders learn not from critical learning events but from a process of reflection, learning and action (Cope, 2005b).

As organisations grow, leaders must delegate and assign more tasks to others in the organisation. This provides opportunities for individuals to thrive by learning through greater development and feedback. Positive psychology theory suggests development should have a strength-based approach, strengths being skills, knowledge or talents. For leaders to introduce a strength-based approach to human resource practices in their organisation they must learn to identify and develop individual's strengths, i.e. strengths spot. Clifton & Harter (2003, as cited by Asplund & Blacksmith, 2011) proposed development should be by identifying an individual's dominant talents so they can then be ranked, employed, and refined by the addition of knowledge and skills to the point that they can be considered a strength (Asplund & Blacksmith, 2011). This approach differs from a traditional approach to individual feedback and development where the focus would be on fixing the individual's areas of weakness. By focusing on the natural strengths and uniqueness of an individual it demonstrates organisational commitment and trust in that individual from which there should be greater positive outcomes, individually and organisationally, as the individual focuses their efforts on their strengths more often than trying to resolve weaknesses resulting in greater gains (Hodges & Asplund, 2009, as cited by Asplund and Blacksmith, 2011).

From an organisational perspective to be sustainable, it is crucial to have leaders who are positive through times of change (Nel et al., 2015) and have access to future leaders and managers who have positive leadership qualities to lead through ever evolving environments. Progressive management education should draw on different disciplines to increase the leader's ability to understand the needs of team members. As such, Henisz (2011) called for leadership training to take a more multi-disciplinary approach than it has in the past, to enrich curricula to ensure leaders of the future are equipped to lead in dynamic times, and so they can lead effectively despite changing society demands, contexts and across different global cultures (Bildstein, Gueldenberg, & Tjitra, 2013). This should enhance not only professional growth of leaders but also their personal growth and level of thriving. Thriving organisations have trust at their foundation and this can be demonstrated by a leader who can exhibit compassion as a sign of trustworthiness. However, leaders may need an appreciation that changes in their behaviour take time to cultivate, becoming more empathic with their team would not necessarily impact their learning, but the support positively correlates to their level of vitality and increases the psychological capital of a leader and as such is seen as an important aspect of positive leadership training (Mortier et al., 2016). The application of the training can increase a leader's rating from his/her employees and promotes positive feelings in the workplace, with a two-way dialogue helping the leader to understand and support their subordinates, leaving them feeling valued and energised to perform better.

2.9 Conclusions

This literature review has shown how the thriving at work construct has developed since 2005. The results show that the Spreitzer et al.'s 2005 T@W model can be a gauge for use by the individual to assess their own development, to self-adapt and direct their own goals and career aspirations over time and across new and varying situations. This increasing self-awareness of both an individual's personal vitality and learning to help them initiate change in their jobs to continue to thrive (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Organisational structure and culture can impact thriving at work at the individual and collective level. Leaders and managers of individuals must be aware of how and when to show support and encourage growth, and positive organisations need to ensure that contextual features are part of the organisation's culture and

provide the resources that are antecedents for thriving. Thriving at the individual level can then rise upwards to team level and ultimately organisational level which is positively correlated to organisational performance, (Boyd, 2015; Gerbasi et al., 2015; Porath et al., 2012; Cole et al., 2012). Leaders of organisations have a pivotal role to play with regards thriving. Not only do they themselves have to thrive, to have the energy and knowledge with which to grow their organisations, but they have to put the processes in place for both human thriving and organisational sustainability. Positive leadership education allows leaders to develop themselves and create new identities suitable for their organisation as it grows and understand how to manage employees in periods of change that result in them thriving. As can be seen from appendix one, table four empirical research to date has focused on how thriving at work interplays with other positive psychology constructs or how the model affects employees of the organisations situated outside the UK. By undertaking a qualitative inquiry using a phenomenological approach, as discussed in the following chapter, the study addresses the gap in the literature by looking at thriving at work of owner-managers of high growth organisations, situated in the UK.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter of the thesis details the philosophical underpinnings of the study and demonstrates how the philosophy influenced the research methods that were chosen to achieve the study's overall aim. The philosophical foundations that underpin this research are rooted in a constructivist ontology with the nature of reality being socially constructed, knowledge seen as both subjective and idiographic, and dependent on how it is interpreted by the individual. Overall, the study applied a socially embedded model of thriving at work, (Spreitzer et al., 2005) as its framework to understand thriving in this context, gathering data to understand more about these realities and the phenomena of thriving at work for owner-managers of growth organisations. Lincoln and Guba, (1985) suggest that “[social] realities are a whole that cannot be understood in isolation from their contexts nor can they be fragmented for separate study of their parts” (p.39), so as the work environment for most individuals involves interacting with others it makes work essentially a social experience.

The research is qualitative using interpretative phenomenological analysis as a methodology to investigate and interpret through an iterative process the data collected from semi-structured interviews that were then analysed to interpret meaning and understanding. This approach is quite different to the research that has been undertaken to date with regard to the conceptualisation and validation of the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) which has been predominately quantitative or conceptual in nature (see appendix one, table four). This study also differs from those earlier studies as it focuses on the experiences of owner-managers of growth organisations in the UK who are thriving, as opposed to one with employees or managers as its participants. This methodology gives unique insights as to what thriving at work means for these participants and allows for a depth of understanding thereby adding to knowledge of the thriving at work concept as it is experienced by owner-managers.

The chapter now details the research philosophy, the research approach and the procedures that were followed to turn the narrative accounts into a presentation of the researcher's analytical interpretation supported with verbatim extracts from the owner-managers.

3.1 Philosophical assumptions of the research

3.1.1 Ontology and epistemology

The ontological philosophy that underpins a research study distinguishes its approach to the phenomena under investigation, either positivist or interpretivist. Ontology is concerned with the nature of being, "what is out there to know, the nature of reality and whether this exists independent of the observer," (Maylor, Blackmon, & Huemann, 2017, p.104). Positivist approaches adopt an objectivist ontological stance and view on reality, believing reality to be independent of human perception and cognition, suggesting that there is a single reality that can be researched through the thorough application of a scientific methodology. In contrast, this research has an ontology embedded in constructivism, seeing knowledge as constructed from a certain perspective, based on the perceptions of the individual, the owner-manager. Given this philosophical framework social phenomena can only be viewed from an individual's perspective and can never be seen as definitive (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This approach places emphasis on the discovery of patterns and meanings over universal truths. The research looked at what thriving at work meant for owner-managers in their work context, how this was co-constructed through interactions with the world and influenced by their personal, historical and socio-cultural context.

Epistemology is philosophically linked to ontology and is concerned with the theory of knowledge, what we can know and how we can create knowledge of reality (Mayor et al., 2017), and is about "the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known," (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.104), using methods to gain a more extensive understanding of that social reality. For a researcher with a positivist stance this would involve applying scientific methods to gain causal understanding. However, this research rejects an objective epistemological stance preferring a more relativist and interpretative approach. This

research rests on the owner-manager's subjective account of their experience and to comprehend the world from the owner-managers' perspective, aiming to understand how their social experience is created and given meaning by the owner-managers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), thereby increasing the knowledge relating to thriving at work, its meaning, and the effect of this activity. This research sees the owner-managers in the study as social actors who negotiate meaning from their actions and situations, interacting with other individuals, their culture and society to further their understanding of the phenomena of thriving at work.

In addition to the ontology and epistemology of this research, other theoretical influences existed within the study. Understanding these is important to allow the reader to comprehend how the methodology was implemented and the rationale for its use. The next section of the chapter considers the theory of the methodology used, the influences and how they addressed the aims of the study, including the role of the researcher and the subtleties of the research.

3.2 Phenomenology

This study was committed to the examination of how people make sense of life experiences, so a phenomenological approach was adopted to discover a perspective on their life in relation to the phenomena of thriving at work, to uncover what matters to people within their lived worlds (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenologists focus on an individual's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, and seek to access the inner worlds of those individuals, with their world, or reality, seen as integral and not separate to them. Phenomenological research looks to uncover what an experience is like either for the individual or group of homogenous individuals (Gill, 2014), seeking to unfold meanings from those lived experiences.

The phenomenological school of thought includes a broad spectrum of beliefs and approaches, although they all share an interest in understanding what the human experience is like (Smith et al., 2009). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) adopted in this research is in line with the ontological stance of the study. Smith (1996) described this approach as a method to "capture the experiential and qualitative" in order to understand in detail how an individual experience the

phenomenon within their particular context. This is a relatively new research methodology which was first introduced in the 1990's in psychology and other cognitive disciplines (Smith, 1996) and later in entrepreneurship and business following the work of Cope (2005a, 2011); Gill (2013); Murtagh, Lopes, and Lyons (2011); and Rehman and Roomi (2012), and aims to make sense of life experiences in an attempt to uncover the meaning and the resultant reality of the owner-manager's experience in the social world. As thriving at work is experienced differently by everyone, there is no one experience, and no one truth or reality, it resulted in many 'realities' of thriving being experienced. The approach is concerned with ways in which the owner-managers make sense and meaning of their experience which allows this study to provide a rich and detailed account of how owner-managers understand and experience the phenomena of thriving at work. The IPA approach has its theoretical origins in phenomenology and hermeneutics and has an idiographic (study of the individual) focus to uncover the meaning made by the individual of the phenomena as they reflect on their experience (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006; Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005; Shinebourne, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenological approaches tend to fall between the 'realist' and 'relativist' ends of the continuum. Smith et al. (2009) suggested that this spectrum was necessary as 'without the phenomenology, there would be nothing to interpret, [and] without hermeneutics the phenomenon would not be seen' (p.37). The approaches can be characterised by the distinction and emphasis placed upon hermeneutic (interpretation) and idiographic understanding (Smith et al., 2009), and those stemming from a traditional Husserlian approach which typically focus upon descriptive accounts of experience (Giorgi, 2008).

Husserl was described by Gill (2014) as the putative founder of phenomenological philosophy that is concerned with the study of the conscious experience which seeks to describe the essence of experiences, using a descriptive method of 'reduction' which underpins the analytical process. It can be pre-supposed, descriptive, or transcendental, in which the individual is said to engage with and make sense of the phenomena. As a researcher it is important to be conscious of your position in the study and in order to understand things as people experience them, and it involves the researcher moving away from their natural attitude through reflexivity (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). A later philosopher Heidegger (as cited by Gill, 2014;

Smith et al., 2009) challenged the bracketing concept and took a more psychological process approach to understanding human experiences. Heidegger disagreed with the way exploration of the lived experience ensues, he argued that it is not possible to fully bracket off. Humans are part of a world of objects, relationships and language, so the researchers should concern themselves with understanding and interpreting the experience itself, the related practical activities, and the relationships engaged in by the research participant, as a result of the experience.

Heidegger argued that ‘the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation’ thereby presenting interpretation through the process of hermeneutics as a pre-requisite of phenomenology, thus interpretive phenomenological analysis. However, some form of bracketing remains important for IPA. Denscombe (2014) wrote “no research is ever free from influence of those who conducted it” (p.300) so when undertaking a phenomenological enquiry, as in this study, the researcher searched for a explanation of what has happened through engagement with a small number of participants, owner-managers, with the aim of setting aside her personal experiences (Denscombe, 2014), by “bracketing-off” presuppositions and preconceptions as recommended by Shultz, (1962, as cited by Denscombe, 2014). For this study it involved looking at and examining the experience of thriving through a ‘pure’ reflexive lens with the researcher stepping outside of her everyday experience, aiming to bracket off what she took for granted in order to achieve a perception of the world in order to allay any presuppositions. The researcher was not aware of all of the preconceptions in advance, so reflective practices, and a cyclical approach to bracketing was required during the study by taking an open, non-judgemental approach whilst in discussions with the owner-managers and later in the transcription and interpretation process, whilst simultaneously being conscious of and holding back prior assumptions and understanding or knowledge.

An individual’s account of a phenomena is their subjective experience, not their property, just their perception (Smith et al., 2009). The theory of hermeneutics, or interpretation, is one of the theories underpinning IPA and influences the research and the role of the researcher. This study the researcher took on a dual role utilising the double hermeneutic (Smith & Osborn, 2003) to make sense of the participant’s

sense-making, employing the same mental skills and capabilities of the owner-manager, then employing those skills self-consciously and systematically in sense-making through the owner-managers' account of their experience. This required the researcher to analyse the text in detail, firstly to codify the transcripts and then re-analyse the text in light of those codes to discover themes and nuances which may otherwise be hidden. Advocates of IPA see this depth of analysis exceeding and subsuming the explicit claims of the research participants (Smith et al., 2009). The level of interpretation, meaning-making, and presentation of the analysis results by the researcher being inseparably linked with the research, so a phenomenological attitude is required to aim for impartiality, together with an awareness that this may not always be possible given the position and experience of the researcher. The process is idiographic and, in this study, focused on a small number of owner-managers who were thriving at work in order to reveal something of that experience for each of those individuals. The approach was used by Cope (2011) who used IPA to study the experiences of entrepreneurs when they had business failure, drawing out subtlety from the descriptions given by the participant in an interview which generated knowledge that was seen to reflect the reality for those participants. Interviews allow people to say what they do, what they believe, and their opinions, they are "a conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent," (Moser & Kalton 1971 p.271 as cited by Bell, 2010) and a social encounter that is co-constructed by the interviewer and interviewee (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

The analysis of the data from the owner-managers was idiographic in nature in that it was concerned with the particular (Shinebourne, 2011), and how a particular experience had been understood from their perspective in a particular context (Smith et al., 2009), in this case work. IPA recommends detailed examination either of one case, or a small number of cases, to look for similarities and differences across those cases. This examination led to the production of fine-grained accounts and patterns of meaning for the owner-managers who reflected upon their experience (Smith et al., 2009). Husserl reasoned that the fundamental features of the lived experience could transcend the particular circumstance to allow the results to enlighten others, in this case others associated with the UK's eco-system for scale-up businesses. The lived experience is personal to the individual, a product derived from the properties

of their relationships to the world and others, rather than creatures in isolation, (Smith et al., 2009). IPA studies do not set out to make generalised claims, preferring to give in-depth understanding that may resonate with others in a similar situation.

As thriving at work is a subjective state of a lived experience which is unique to the individual and their situated relationship to the world, this study attempted to understand the relationship by descriptive commitment, being interpretative, focusing on the owner-manager's attempts to make meanings out of their experiences and to the things that have happened/were happening to them, resulting in an understanding of the thriving of work experience for the owner-managers in the study.

3.3 The choice of IPA

The research questions posed, and the purpose of the research study demanded suitable methodological approaches. The strength of qualitative research is its solid grounding in the phenomenon, with discovery being unique and nonlinear. As the aims and objectives of this research were around understanding the experience of thriving at work, there was a preference for depth of study based on fewer people allowing the researcher to become close to the data, gaining familiarity with the subject matter, and understanding behaviour from the perspective of the owner-managers in the research. The owner-managers through their everyday interactions at work, and in other situations, develop and construct their own meaning that is both subjective and personalised to them and ultimately become internalised as their realities (Stokes, 2011). The emphasis of this study was on the convergence and divergence (Smith et al., 2009) of the lived experience by owner-managers as they experienced the phenomena – thriving at work.

Early research to validate and measure the construct of thriving at work was concerned with the proof of the phenomena and undertook quantitative research to measure the existence of thriving, whereas this study, used IPA, and was concerned with how and why thriving occurs in the social world at work for the owner-manager, and as such focused on qualitative research. IPA rejects a single objective

reality, in favour of a more constructive view of the world, seeing truth not as black and white or a single event, but as multiple subjective realities constructed by the owner-managers as they make meaning, then how the researcher interprets that meaning. Owner-managers are often outside of the corporate structure as they are running their own business, they are more independent and individualistic, so this research approach allowed for a diverse set of interpretations to arise, making the interpretation relativist, transactional and subjectivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Phenomenology has a descriptive orientation which was suited to this study of owner-managers' experiences of thriving at work and how they made sense of their reality. The research used a descriptive phenomenological strategy to provide an interpretative understanding of the phenomenon within the social context of a growth organisation, to identify and build on the themes from the experiences described by the research participants, the owner-managers. Albert Schultz believed that "social reality has a specific meaning and relevance structure for beings living, acting and thinking within it" (Schultz, 1962 p.59 as cited by Bryman & Bell, 2015 p.30). The study used a phenomenological interview "to ensure that the relevant contexts are brought into focus so that situated knowledge can be produced" (Mason, 2017) and allowed the owner-manager the opportunity to "describe their experiences of things", (Hammond et al., 1991 as cited by Cope, 2005a), in sufficient descriptive detail to illustrate how they felt thriving takes place for them and how they live this experience. Providing an experientially based understanding of the phenomena and how it fits with the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005), so adding to the construct.

The data collection was through the use of semi-structured interviews facilitated by open-ended questions to elicit the experiences of the owner-managers. The interview used flexibility as a strength, giving the owner-manager an important stake in what was covered (Smith et al., 2009), with the actual interview questions flexing to follow wherever the owner-manager led the discussion around the research questions, and as such the researcher had to be sharp and adjust on the fly (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2013). In line with other organisational IPA studies (Cope, 2005a; 2011; Hemme, Morais, Bowers & Todd, 2017; Munoz & Cohen, 2018; Smith et al., 2009) and the epistemological position of this study was conducted on a relatively small sample size using participants who fit a certain criterion to examine

the convergence and divergence of thriving for them in some detail. Assertions were bound by the owner-managers studied and it is recognised that this approach limits the research, as results are not generalisable across a wider population. However, the use of a small sample to gain an in-depth analysis should enrich the existing literature and has the potential to add to the development of theoretical framework (Tsang, 2014) of thriving at work, by relating the owner-managers' experiences to existing professional and experiential knowledge of the researcher.

Phenomenological inquiry is inherently qualitative in nature as the world of the "lived experience" does not always correspond with the world of objective description, because objectivity often implies trying to explain an event or experience as separate from its contextual setting (Cope, 2005a). The use of interviews gave the opportunity to translate the interpretative accounts that owner-managers have experienced when they feel that they thrive at work and how this transfers across to their organisations, putting them and their experience central to this research.

3.4 Alternative methodologies

Quantitative research takes an objective stance and uses a positivist paradigm, favouring large scale studies that focus on numbers to allow generalisations to be made about the wider populations giving statistically reliable indicators to show cause and effect based on the numbers produced. This approach could have been carried out with owner-managers and this would have aligned to previous research in the area of thriving at work, (Porath et al., 2012; Niessen et al., 2012; Patterson et al., 2014). Quantitative research is appropriate where the aim of the study is to measure participants' level of thriving, or the relatedness of different variables, and for the results to be generalisable. However, the aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the construct to illuminate areas particular to owner-managers who are thriving, which was not fully achievable through the use of surveys as the results were unlikely to be 'black and white'. At this point it is worth noting that this study used a survey, not to enable the generalisation of the results, but as an identification tool from which the purposeful sample was drawn.

As this research was concerned with ‘how’ owner-managers experience thriving at work it was deemed appropriate by the researcher to use qualitative analysis to align with the ontological and epistemological stance of the study. Within the field of qualitative research there are a number of approaches to research including narrative methodologies, discourse analysis and thematic analysis. Grounded theory was considered as the traditional model focuses on the individual like IPA, but the essence of grounded theory is on theory building as constructed by the researcher, with data generation and analysis occurring concurrently, moving from induction to deduction (Charmaz, 2008), with theory discovered by analysing the concepts grounded in the data (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). However, this study was focused on how the existing construct of thriving at work was experienced by the owner-manager. Constructivist Grounded Theory is often seen as an alternative to IPA (Smith et al., 2009) as researchers seek to explain the influences of social processes (Willig, 2013) and how things are accomplished through a given set of social structures (Starks & Trinidad, 2007), making the meaning and context inextricably linked. However, Smith et al. (2009) argues that IPA’s primary concern is that of the individual and is experiential, whilst other constructivist approaches include explicit contexts and the discussion is framed by forces influencing that context.

This study accepts the challenge to explore comprehensively the owner-managers’ psychological experience of thriving at work whilst holding pivotal positions in organisations, surrounded by the sociological and economic context, and as such IPA became more attractive as it permitted creativity and freedom (Willig, 2013), allowing the researcher to engage with the participant in making sense of their experience generatively which was then made sense of by the researcher. In addition, there were practical considerations for not using grounded theory. Both IPA and grounded theory employ purposive sampling, the sample sizes for grounded theory could have been larger as the sample is extended until theoretical saturation is reached. IPA is concerned with particular individuals to gain a detailed account of their experience and so again was more appropriate.

To conclude, quantitative research with its positivist orientation would not have satisfied the ontological or epistemological stance of this study and grounded theory, whilst it would satisfy the ontological and inductivist approach for this study, sets

out to generate theory of a phenomenon using the individual's accounts to illustrate a theoretical claim and so would not have been suited to the epistemology for the study which focused on the owner-manager's subjective account of their experience looking to add to an existing construct. In addition, the reiterative process of data collection and analysis for grounded theory makes the methodology not suitable on practical grounds as the researcher works full time and the participants are busy owner-managers making further data collection not possible. The role of the researcher and the epistemological positioning of the research were central to the study making IPA more suitable.

3.5 Research approach

As this study takes an IPA approach it does not strive to make universal claims, or provide a definitive list of action to follow, but rather cautious general claims about the particular group of owner-managers who fit the criteria of the study, and is idiographic to give the perspective of the owner-manager to gain insights into their experience and thoughts, which makes qualitative research more apt.

3.5.1 Research design

This section of the chapter outlines the specific research techniques that were used in this study, the aim of which was to explore how owner-managers thrive at work. At the heart of the study were interviews to obtain both retrospective and real-time accounts by owner-managers experiencing the phenomenon of thriving. Analysis was then employed on the data generated to allow for comparison and across themes to be highlighted.

3.5.2 Participants-sample selection

The participants for this study were owner-managers who were thriving at work. For an outsider the initial identification of these owner-managers would be challenging; as an outsider viewing an organisation cannot readily determine if an organisation is a growth organisation and whether or not, the owner is thriving. To overcome the first hurdle the researcher identified owner-managers of organisations who had been on an education programme designed to assist them execute the necessary steps to scale their organisations. The use of participants on educational programmes aligns

to the research undertaken to validate the T@W model as that study used MBA students as one of their cases, (Porath et al., 2012). It was anticipated when designing the research that the participants selected would be those owner-managers that when measured under the model are shown to be thriving at work and these would be sufficient in number to give a sample from several industry sectors. Considering owner-managers who are not defined as thriving under the model is beyond the scope of this research but is an opportunity for future research.

Eligibility for the educational programme in the UK was that the owner's business must be a growth organisation, the definition of which is in-line with the OECD's definition, whereby organisations have:

1. Turnover – of at least £250,000; and
2. Employees – 5 to 50 employees; and
3. Growth – business must be scalable; and
4. In Business – more 3 years

The delegates for the programme are publicly listed in a “Unlocking UK Productivity” report (<https://www.enterpriseresearch.ac.uk/unlocking-uk-productivity-internationalisation-and-innovation-of-smes/>). The companies in the report were nationwide growth companies and from these, those located in the North-West of England were identified. This selection was in part due to the location of the researcher with the geographic location acting as a natural boundary for the study. Justification for using growth organisations is that these organisations already have a viable business model, so excluded early stage start-up organisations.

IPA samples are usually fewer than 10 participants, each providing a detailed and rich account of their experience of the phenomenon and reflections on it (Smith, et al., 2009; Cope, 2005a). This study included a cross-section of participants, representing different ages, genders, industrial sectors, length of time in business, with the study using, more or less, identical research questions on contrasting cases as this allowed better understanding of the social phenomena (Bryman & Bell, 2015), and allowed for an intensive examination of each participant through qualitative comparison of each owner-manager's situation. By comparing two or

more participants the analysis established the context in which theory held or did not hold, highlighting common themes that exhibit patterns of thriving at work.

3.5.3 *Data generation*

The main data collection tool used in this study was phenomenological interviews that were semi-structured interviews as a recognised method for data generation in qualitative research as they offer the opportunity to acquire in-depth first-person accounts of a participant's experience (Kvale, 2007 as cited by Vicary, Young & Hicks, 2017), and for IPA studies facilitate the elicitation of stories, thoughts and feelings about the research phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009) and meant the researcher could be flexible, adaptable, and led by what the owner-manager was saying. Whereas, more structured approaches would not have necessarily afforded the opportunity for this level of engagement leading to discoveries or discernments not being uncovered.

The interview's focus was to address the central research question of the study: How do owner-managers of high growth organisations based in the North-West of England thrive at work? The topic schedule is available in appendix seven with primary topics of the interview was focused on the learning and vitality aspects of the T@W model (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2005) and secondary topics on the broader areas that influence the owner-manager's capacity to thrive, both internal and external to their organisation, and how they enable thriving in their organisation drawn from the literature in chapter 2.

The schedule was a guide to aid the flow of the interview and included a mix of follow-up and probing questions to deepen the investigation, and interpretative questions to aid understanding, all of which were open to remain true to the inductive, idiographic nature of IPA. The use of phenomenological interviews, based on experiences, gave a more holistic view of how the owner-managers thrive at work and gave an insight into the idiosyncrasies of their situation rather than generalisations. Focusing on these small number of cases gave a greater and deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding the broader issue of thriving at work for owner-managers. Nevertheless, even with the topic schedule the research was

limited by the degree in which the owner-manager's world view can be adopted and by how much the owner-manager was willing to reveal.

There is an inherent danger in using interviews as a primary research method that bias could creep into the study. Sellitz, (1962 as cited by Bell, 2010) recognised that "interviewers are human beings and not machines, and their manner might have an effect on respondents" and bias could occur either deliberately or unwittingly. It was imperative for the researcher to have an analytical focus when carrying out the research, to engage in a critical and reflective process of evaluation and consider how any pre-conceptions influenced the research (Finlay, 2011). To limit any bias around the definition of thriving at work a broader description 'an owner-manager of a successful growth company and energy for life' was used in any discussions between the researcher and the owner-managers.

The phenomenological interview is one method of inquiry and this is complemented with secondary supporting observations (Siggelkow, 2007). In addition, supporting evidence was obtained from observations made during the interview process. Stokes & Wall (2014) cite Silverman (2011) and state that inductive research is undertaken to elaborate, deepen, and broaden understanding around a hypothesis, in this case that vitality and learning together can allow individuals, in this case owner-managers, to thrive at work.

3.6 Data collection

The study followed a systematic process to collect data as follows:

3.6.1 Stage one – Sample selection

Step 1: The identification survey

The participants were chosen because of their unique position as owner-managers of high growth organisations and so epitomised the dimension of interest of this research study. The initial identification of the owner-managers involved in the study was by using a non-probability form of sampling, purposeful sampling, based on the owner-manager's relevance to the research question and their alignment to the sampling criteria. Owner-managers were identified as potential participants from the

‘Unlocking UK Productivity’ report (detailed above) as they had attended an educational programme for growth companies and were geographically situated in the North-West of England.

It was then necessary to identify those who were thriving by inviting them to complete an identification survey that measured thriving at work. It should be stressed at this point that this survey was first and foremost an identification survey. The survey consisted of ten questions originally used by Porath et al. (2012) to validate the T@W model and measure thriving in this context. In line with the survey used by Porath et al. (2012) this identification survey included a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all, to 5 = to a great extent. The questions are designed to establish which individuals perceive themselves as having high levels of learning and have high levels of vitality, as such, there are five questions on each and include the following:

At work

- I find myself learning often
- I continue to learn more as time goes by
- I see myself continually improving
- I am not learning
- I am developing a lot as a person
- I feel alive and vital
- I have energy and spirit
- I do not feel energetic
- I feel alert and awake
- I am looking forward to each day

Step 2: The choice of participants

Included in the survey was a self-selection identifier for those owner-managers who were willing to be involved further in the study. The completed self-selector surveys were analysed to identify high thrivers at work. In line with the IPA approach the sample chosen was small, purposefully sought out from the first respondents who were thriving (with high levels of learning and vitality), and homogeneous in that

they complied with the course criteria, with an anticipation that these criteria give the opportunity to learn from and with an expectation of learning the greatest (Reid et al., 2005; Hefferon & Gill-Rodriguez, 2011), as they ‘represented’ a perspective rather than a population (Smith et al., 2009). The aim was for this purposeful sampling to provide ‘information rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the research’ (Patton, 1990 p.169 as cited by Cope, 2005a, p.175). Details of the level of thriving per participant is included in appendix two.

The owner-manager’s experience was likely to be complex, uniquely situated, and perspectival, making it amenable to an idiographic approach which through their experiences gives insights to other owner-managers, and so working towards one of the recommendations of the Scale-Up Report 2014. For those owner-managers who were not selected they were sent an email thanking them for their participation to date, and for completeness and information purposes an explanation of the definition thriving at work under the model used in this study was provided.

3.6.2 *Stage two – Pilot study*

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study took place with owner-managers who may have been members of the group had a wider geographic region been selected for the research. The identification survey and interview questions were piloted with two owner-managers of high growth organisations from the educational programme, but who are not in the primary sample. The pilot allowed the researcher to gain confidence in the data collection process (Bryman & Bell, 2015) and she was able to address any misunderstandings, and areas that the respondent felt ill at ease with, and once rectified allowed the primary surveys and interviews to flow. Performing the pilot also enabled the researcher to test the recording and technological equipment, gain an understanding of the process of the data collection, and identify and resolve any issues that may arise around the timing of the interviews and transcription process.

The interviews took place just once in a location and at a time of the owner-manager’s choosing. A general introduction allowed the researcher to gain a rapport with the owner-manager to facilitate the research, allowing the owner-manager and

the interviewer to feel confident during the interview to ask for clarification of points there and then, and to help elucidate understanding of what was meant by a question or response. All of the interviews were audio-recorded with the owner-manager's permission, using an application on a mobile phone. This method was quiet and unobtrusive and allowed the recordings to be transferred to a computer directly and transcribed manually. The battery life is long lived so there were no mechanical interruptions. Transcription was undertaken by the researcher to enhance her understanding of the data and involved typing each word spoken by both the owner-manager and the researcher, but as the transcriptions are intended to be a vehicle for interpretation of meaning and not a means for analysis of the narrative, the shared interaction, or the discussion, they did not include the length of pauses or other elements such as a laugh or sigh.

3.6.3 *Stage three – Primary Interviews*

The main form of data collection was face-to-face interviews with owner-managers of growth companies in the North-West of England and followed the same procedures as the pilot interviews. These primary interviews involved a descriptive examination of the perceptions and experiences of the owner-managers of the growth organisations and how they thrive at work to achieve the objectives of the study. In line with the research of Gill (2013) and Murtagh et al. (2011) all of whom studied entrepreneurship using phenomenological inquiry, this study used eight participants detailed in appendix two. This number allowed for a range of experiences to be investigated and gave a richness to the data as the phenomenological approach allowed the owner-manager's voice to be heard and gave an understanding to the different interlocking themes that were generated to enable theory to be crafted when these were combined with analysis and interpretation, (Patton, 1990 as cited by Cope, 2005a).

Following the pilot study, the initial interview questions were very slightly modified to enquire whether the owner-managers attitude to learning had changed over time. The primary interviews continued to include open ended questions to guide the discussion and to allow experiences to be articulated to explore the phenomena in question. This approach allowed a balance of understanding of thriving at work for owner-managers along with an assurance that conversation had both purpose and

relevance to the research. Each interview took approximately forty-five minutes each to complete. The aim was to have interviews of equal length for comparability purposes. To act as an audit trail of the data collection process the interview protocols and the interview questions have been included as appendices (five to seven). On completion of the interviews, pilot and primary, each participant was sent an email thanking them for their participation and for completeness and information purposes an explanation of the definition thriving at work under the model used in this study.

3.6.4 *Stage four - The analysis of the data*

3.6.4.1 *General approach*

This qualitative study used current theory as a backdrop for interpreting the data, moving from the raw data to the analysed data to the emergent themes with the data providing context, description and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The analysis of the interviews conducted as part of this study followed a similar path and was analysed at different levels. Creswell (2013) suggest three interlinked strategies for data analysis - preparing and organising the data, coding, and presenting the data. Preparing and organising involved transforming the experience of data collection into text, coding the data to capture the researcher's interpretation of its essential meaning, and finally presenting the data by writing in different ways to display new aspects of the phenomenon.

By taking a hermeneutics approach to examining and interpreting thriving at work it gave the researcher the opportunity to make sense of the subjective experience of thriving at work for owner-managers, by considering the dynamic relationship between the different aspects of the data and the relationship of those aspects to the whole and at different levels. This approach has been criticised in the literature as it is inherently circular as the researcher during the analysis aims to understand the part by looking at the whole and looks at the parts to understand the whole (Smith, et al., 2009). However, the process allowed for a non-linear style of thinking by cycling between the emergent data, themes and concepts, and the relevant literature to give a range of different ways of thinking about the data, testing for precedents and moving from inductive to deductive research (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007).

3.6.4.2 *Transcription*

Firstly, following interviews the recordings were transcribed and this allowed the researcher to gain an initial understanding of the responses and start to make personal sense of the data, highlighting potential significant issues (Cope, 2005a). This narrative was both thematic and chronological. As the transcript was a reflection on the owner-manager's lived experience, diplomacy and discretion were key watchwords along with transparency (Corley, 2011), so a narrative respondent validation was sought from each owner-manager to ensure what has been said and transcribed was a true reflection. Once the researcher had confirmation as to the accuracy of the data a cross-case comparison was completed, looking at 'what was common and what was particular to each case' (Stake 1994 p.238 as cited by Cope, 2005a, p.178), this allowed for a deeper understanding of thriving for these participants in their work context and for emergent themes to be identified.

3.6.4.3 *Coding and data analysis*

A systematic approach was taken to the coding of the transcripts following the Gioia methodology (Gioia, et al., 2012). The transcribed scripts were formatted as recommended by (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Woolfe & Silver, 2018), and input into computer assisted analysis software, QSR Nvivo 11. Each transcript was assigned a code and each participant was given a number. The coding of the transcripts made it easier to compare the data from each of the interviews and started to create the basis for the following stage of classification. Throughout the coding process focus on the context of the study was maintained so important elements were not lost, and the data retrieved did not become fragmented (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The collection of data took place over six months and solely by the researcher. The length of time was pragmatic in that the researcher was working full-time, but more importantly it was determined by the methodology, as in-depth analysis was required to allow the hermeneutic cycle to be constantly revolving. The analysis was in four phases, initially the transcripts were read and re-read by the researcher to aid familiarisation and the formulation of particular areas of interest. The data analysis then used three tools provided in the software. The first tool was the annotation of the script to clarify any terminology used and to highlight areas that could be used as thick description at a later date.

The second tool was the identification and naming of codes. Coding is a method of working with qualitative data that provides an abstract theme noted by the researcher and can be descriptive or narrative. The software allowed codes to be anchored in the text that gives rise to them. This first level coding tried to adhere faithfully to the owner-manager's terms with little attempt to distil categories (Gioia et al., 2012). As each transcription was added to the software it was codified and a reflection of the previous codes undertaken for appropriateness and relevance to the research question. This allowed a first level of analysis to begin and provided the a priori codes with further readings of the transcripts identifying segments which aligned to the a priori codes. If there were instances when segments could not be allocated, then consideration was made as to whether these should generate a priori codes (Stokes, Smith, Wall, Moore, Rowland, Ward, & Cronshaw, 2018).

After the data was coded, second level analysis was carried out and the codes were combined into overarching themes by the researcher. This clustering of codes around similarities and concepts meant the number of codes was more manageable and provided evidence that confirmed emergent relationships, to help explain the phenomena being observed, essentially allowing the data to speak for itself, (Hycner, 1985 as cited by Cope, 2005a). This second level analysis used researcher-centric concepts and themes, (Gioia et al., 2013), and made linkages to existing literature, thereby substantiating existing research or adding to it with further considerations and challenges. The themes highlight patterns across the data, based on the codes, which added to the thriving at work phenomenon. Tagging and coding the data in this way was an appropriate method of analysis as it allowed the owner-managers to discuss their thriving at work using their own language and was free from fixed responses as the questions were open-ended. Throughout the process there was constant comparison of the data and the codes and notes were taken on the rationale for codes and their combinations. These notes were recorded in NVivo and this systematic approach added to the credibility of the research and the qualitative nature of the methods used.

3.6.4.4 *Creation of memos*

The third tool in NVivo allowed memos to be created for each script, which allowed the researcher to make reflective notes about the script as they occurred during the

reading and rereading, allowing thoughts to be attached to text. The process also allowed the researcher to record her thoughts about the process of analysis and the creation of each code. For this IPA study the approach helped address the criticisms levied at IPA studies (Larkin et al., 2006; Vicary et al., 2017) as it gave transparency on the movement from first order to second order thinking. A representation of how progression was made from raw data to codes to themes when conducting the research, giving an audit trail that was supported by the reflections on a particular segment of text.

Phenomenological research involves systematically and attentively reflecting on everyday lived experiences (Husserl 1927 as cited by Smith et al., 2009). IPA is concerned with human lived experience and postulates that experience can only be understood via the examination of the meanings which people impress upon it and completing a reflective journal allowed the researcher's thoughts and interpretations to be recorded. The memo system also allowed a reflective journal to be created within the software to record the process of analysis as a whole. This process added to the understandability, transparency, quality and validity of the interpretative phenomenology analysis of this study (Vicary et al., 2017).

3.6.5 *Stage five - The analytical interpretation of the data*

The analysis used both deductive and inductive as it aims to consider whether or not the assumptions surrounding T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) held for this set of individuals and then aimed to consider the emergence of new themes or variations on existing themes in relation to the thriving at work. The analysis come from the structured section of the interview that was linked to the concepts from the model, with subsequent literature guiding the analysis and interpretation. IPA is always interpretative at different levels, firstly by engaging with the main emerging and substantive themes in that data, then secondly by taking a closer look at the metaphors in the transcripts and then thirdly considering any temporal themes (present or past tense) reading from inside the text which, in this study the owner-manager produced, with the aim of understanding and interpreting their experience. The aim was to weave together a credible narrative by pursuing an iterative process, moving back and forth between the concept of thriving at work, the literature, the data collection and analysis, in conjunction with the themes from the data generated

by the owner-managers. The aim of the final interpretation was to be engaging and uncover unknowns by linking both the data and theory narratives. The description of the data generated gave this study in a unique perspective, revealing new properties new about the owner-manager and their organisations, and when this data was then linked to the theory and previous research it highlighted some new insights on the phenomena, supported by thick descriptions from the transcripts to give the reader a sense of context.

Whilst the owner-manager demonstrated that they are thriving in line with the definition proposed by Spreitzer et al. (2005) by completing the identification survey, the interviews aimed to highlight how this transmitted to their organisations and what factors help and hinder their capacity to enable them to maintain their subjective experience of thriving. It was expected some of the processes used by the owner-manager would support the existing literature around contextual features in the T@W model and the resources that enable thriving at work. However, it was unclear at the start of the study whether this happened consciously or unconsciously by the owner manager. By interpreting the data at both the individual and organisational level the results has contributed and enriched the existing literature in the field of positive organisational literature, informational to educators of owner-managers and policy makers in relation to growth companies, as well as, highlighting areas for future research. As recommended by Gioia et al. (2013) for the purposes of rigor and transparency a data structure has been included in appendix eight which allows the reader to see the journey from the first level concepts drawn from owner-managers' transcripts to the first-level codes, based on the owner-managers' terminology, to the second order codes which used research-orientated concepts and themes, to the synthesising of this data into aggregate dimensions. In NVivo it was possible to interrogate the data to highlight any interrelationships between the different codes, particularly when a passage from the interview transcript had been linked to a number of codes, so aiding the theorising part of the analysis.

3.7 Role of the researcher

IPA situated the researcher in a central position during the research process with any observations made during analysis of participant accounts seen as a product of the interpretation (Willig, 2013) of what is revealed and how this was then understood by the researcher. Gioia et al. (2013) saw researchers as glorified reporters whose main role is to give an adequate account of the participant's experience. In doing so, it was important for this IPA researcher not to impose prior constructs or theories on the owner-managers as some sort of preferred a priori explanation for understanding, or to explain their experience. As such, this research did not provide the definition of thriving at work given by Spreitzer et al. (2005) to the participants until after the data has been collected. This approach was to allow the experiences of the owner-managers and what thriving at work means for them to be at the fore and gave the potential for new concepts to be unveiled.

Different phenomenologists place different emphasis on the priority of role. Merleau-Ponty (1964) recognised that the researcher's perception of 'other' will always develop from their own embodied perspective, and the lived experience of being a body-in-the-world can never be entirely captured or absorbed, but he suggested that it equally cannot be overlooked or ignored (Smith et al., 2009). IPA is both phenomenological and interpretative which necessitates researcher reflexivity throughout (Smith et al., 2009). The reflexivity stems from Heidegger's perspective regarding our human state, he claimed individuals are born into a world filled with people, objects, language and culture, so precludes any meaningful detachment from the world. Every interpretation is already contextualised and can never be presupposition-less (Shinebourne, 2011). When carrying out IPA research this researcher examined how she views existence and reality to get alignment of her personal and methodological philosophy, and also considered how her multiple realities impact how she thinks of the world, (Mills & Birks, 2014). Throughout the research process the researcher remained reflexive, actively engaging in the process, so she was responsive to how her position influenced the conduct of the research, to ensure a critical review of her involvement and how it impacted on the processes and outcomes was undertaken. Throughout the analysis and interpretation process a personal journal was maintained as a record of reflexivity, detailing the actions,

feelings, and influences on the researcher's thinking and the resultant impact on the analysis and further actions.

Taking on board the Heidegger perspective regarding our human state, and for the purposes of transparency, it is necessary for the researcher to identify her values, assumptions and bias. The researcher has an up to date knowledge of current theory and research on thriving at work, she has also had a long involvement in and around owner-managed businesses that have both succeeded and failed. Throughout her childhood several family members, including her parents, had their own business and then she had her own business with her partner. These early years gave her insights into the commitment and drive required to run an owner-managed business and the tremendous pressure these individuals are under to develop and maintain their business, coupled with the responsibility for their employees' well-being. As a researcher, she now uses her personal skills, and professional knowledge, as a Lecturer in a University Business School in the North-West of England to students on executive programmes and as a mentor to small growing businesses in the region. This involvement gave impetus to this study to understand how successful owner-managers thrive in their organisations. The researcher believes that her experiences enhance the awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to the issues that may have arisen during the study and ultimately assisted her in working with the owner-managers. However, she aimed to take the stance of a stranger, aiming to bracket off preconceptions and maintaining a phenomenological attitude in order to observe things that may otherwise be obstructed from view, and, as such aimed to uncover surprising findings through objectivity. This study was an exploration of a lived experience combined with a subjective and reflective process of interpretation (Reid et al., 2005). Any suppositions drawn were mindful of the study's context and culture and were done so cautiously.

The role of the researcher and the dynamics of the research to understand the experience of thriving at work provided a further rationale for using IPA as a methodological approach in this study. IPA was particularly suited to the professional skill of the researcher as a mentor to, and long-standing experience with, owner-managers, as the skills enabled the double hermeneutic, developing knowledge initially through empathy and then through questioning and the critical

idiographic analysis of the information generated. The researcher endeavoured to provide an accurate and open depiction of thriving at work but was aware that with qualitative research it is impossible to eliminate the role of the researcher when data is viewed, collected and interpreted. The researcher recognised that to fully understand the experiences of owner-manager there was a need to be open-minded regarding the thoughts and experiences of others, and the researcher purposefully ignored any existing theories and ideas (Cope, 2005a).

3.8 Quality and validity

For all research the issue of quality and validity is of importance. This study considered the four broad principles offered by Yardley (2000) as detailed by Smith et al. (2009) to demonstrate their application to IPA studies. The principles are:

Sensitivity to context, whereby the research must acknowledge and represent good understanding of theory to show a sound knowledge of the relevant literature, as well as the contextual setting. The theory underpinning thriving at work is given as part of the literature chapter and the beginning of this chapter explained the theory underpinning the methodological approach. The relevant literature helped to steer the study and the findings were related to the relevant literature (Smith et al., 2009). The social and cultural setting may be a future criticism of this study as it was located in a particular geographic region of the UK. However, owner-managers were recruited because they shared the lived experience and their engagement with the researcher was central to the study as it enabled the parties to interact successfully during the interview to derive good data. The presentation of the findings is from the owner-manager's perspective and is sprinkled with their narrative, however, as with all IPA studies it is the interpretation by the researcher that is of importance which is why a clear audit trail and reflective journal was maintained.

Commitment and rigour are the second principles. Both of these are demonstrated in a number of ways in this study. The analytical approach of this study required different levels and types of commitment by the researcher. Firstly, was the commitment to analysing the data in detail to give a depth to the understanding achievable by being thorough and systematic. Secondly, by being committed to

understanding how the particular experiential phenomenon is understood, by the owner-manager, by sharing a level of empathy. Thirdly, commitment also came from the attentiveness to the owner-manager during the data collection process and in-depth interview. All of these commitments demonstrated a significant amount of personal investment by the researcher (Smith et al., 2009). Evidence of rigour can be found in the transcripts of each interview (available by email) and how closely they align with the research question, then the data structure in appendix eight and presentation of the findings demonstrate the movement from the descriptive to the interpretation. Each theme is supported by quotes from a number of owner-managers to enable the reader to understand where the interpretation arises from and gives the opportunity to agree or disagree.

Transparency and coherence are the third principles. A clear process, as detailed above shows a reader the link between the presentation of the data, by detailing the steps taken and why, the fit between what was undertaken, and the theoretical assumptions gives a clear logic for the themes highlighted. This is shown throughout the thesis, including details of reflexivity and articulation in the memos that detail the move from raw data to codes, codes to themes, and subsequent interpretation.

The last criterion is *impact and importance*. The findings chapter of this study demonstrates its importance for other small business owners, their educators and policy makers, and highlights areas for consideration for the thriving at work for a construct in relation to this set of individuals.

3.9 Limitations of the research methods used

The IPA method simultaneously has strengths and limitations as follows:

- The number of owner-managers is small. For some this fact might suggest that the findings have to be interpreted cautiously as the sample size is not large enough to make generalised findings across all industries, or demographics, as there would be too many influential factors in terms of precursors affecting potential outcomes. However, as the study was focused on a particular context it is plausible that the findings from these instances will be recognisable and applicable to wider contexts (Eisenhardt &

Graebner, 2007; Sigglekow, 2007). The underpinning methodology provides a robust rationale for such numbers and also a justification for what are idiographic understandings. The study was not specifically designed to evaluate quantity or be representative but to establish defensible propositions that may have a wider significance in different contexts beyond these owner-managers.

- The research methods included the use of a purposive sample. Owner-managers who were thriving bring their own unique perspective with them and the findings may have been different with a different sample. Each owner-manager had varying financial and organisational issues, and other factors that may have contributed to their perceptions of what thriving at work means to them. The methodological approach was crucial in this respect. The analysis of data was in-depth to make sense of the owner-manager's sense-making. It can be seen as an interpretative and experiential exercise from which broader conclusions are not the primary objective which differentiates it from existing literature.
- The data collection period was limited to one-time period and is only indicative of the data at that point in time rather than a time study with several data collection points to assess thriving at work over time. Whilst this is a limitation of this study the results offer insights for future longitudinal studies.
- A final factor, that is simultaneously a limitation and a strength of this study, is that of the author and her professional identity, a qualified accountant who has extensive lived experience with small businesses. This experience meant that she was able to readily empathise with participants, but this was also challenging as there was a need to put this previous understanding to one side in order to question and enact both the double hermeneutic and the phenomenological reduction. In part this was addressed through the completion of a reflective journal during the analysis and writing up phase of the research process. Reflecting on the researcher's thoughts on the process

and the influences on it, was a way of bracketing off previous understanding, to aid the quality and validity of the research.

Due to these limitations, direct causation between correlations and interventions was not possible. However, the themes that were uncovered through the analysis from this study contributes to the phenomena and can act as a signpost to where further research could be undertaken with regard to owner-managers and thriving at work. The results also highlight factors that may be worth cultivating to foster thriving at work at an organisational level, supporting owner-manager's thriving on their growth journey.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The ethical framework for this research is aligned to the University of Chester's Research Governance Handbook 2016/17, and with consideration of principles from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). As such, "All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the University of Chester's research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards." The aim by using a framework was to protect both the owner-managers of the growth organisations, who are the participants of the research, and the researcher by ensuring that ethical aspects of the research are considered from the outset so to minimise any risks and ensure adequate safeguards were put in place, to ensure the integrity and quality of the research. Denscombe (2014) states that research undertaken should:

- Protect the interests of participants
- Ensure participation is voluntary and based on informed consent
- Avoid deception and operate with scientific integrity
- Comply with the law

Throughout the research the anonymity of the owner-managers was maintained, with pseudonyms used in the final project report and any further publications coming from it. The research methodology was designed so at each stage the owner-

managers was not harmed in any way, physically, emotionally or reputationally. With confidentiality regarding what they said and who they are being paramount, with the raw data password protected, stored in the cloud and destroyed after three years after the conclusion of the study.

The email to owner-managers inviting them to complete the identification survey included a clear explanation as to the purpose of the research, the commitment level required, and an assurance to the confidentiality that would be maintained throughout the research process.

The aim was to give the owner-managers sufficient information with which to make a judgement on whether or not to participate in the survey and then whether or not to self-select to be involved further in the study. Once owner-managers had been purposefully selected for face-to-face interviews a formal document, the informed consent form, was compiled and emailed to them. Written informed consent stated the nature of the agreement between the researcher and the interviewee (Blaxter et al. 2005 as cited by Bell 2010). The consent form gave the essence of the research and details of how any data produced as a result of the study was to be used, reported and disseminated. Prior to the start of the interview the research was described verbally and any additional questions on the consent form were answered by the researcher. Only if the owner-managers were happy to participate was data collected and used in the study. The owner-managers had the right to withdraw at any stage, without prejudice, and data relating to them that was collected at that point would have been destroyed.

During the course of the interviews no judgement was made on the owner-managers, and the data gathered will not be used for any purpose other than this study and any related publication. The researcher aimed to work ethically, collecting data in an objective and honest manner, drawing conclusions that are both balanced and dispassionate. The researcher will comply with the UK Data Protection Act 1998 and in doing so only collected the data necessary for the purposes of the study, it was kept secure with access only available to the researcher and the supervisors of the doctorate. To ensure the accuracy of the data collected the owner-managers were given a copy of the transcription of the interviews that took place and were given the opportunity to receive a copy of the final report from the study.

3.11 Conclusion

The chapter has argued that the methodology fits both the purpose and the practicality of the study. From an ontological perspective, IPA focuses on subjective reality from the viewpoint of the research participant. This study wished to explore thriving at work for owner-managers, with knowledge arising from the meaning the owner-manager attached to that experience. IPA encourages meaning making by the participant and by the researcher and draws upon a range of influences which drive the methodology. A phenomenological attitude was required by the researcher who also engaged in a hermeneutic circle to reflect on and interpret the data to focus on the phenomenon. The approach matched both the role of the researcher and the dynamics of the study, as well as the practicalities.

The processes that were followed has been outlined above including those relating to the ethical permission, the identification of the owner-managers, and the rationale for the makeup and size of the sample. The main technique for data gathering was the semi-structured interview which is a well-known approach in qualitative research, and IPA studies, and was managed using a computer software package. The chapter includes a discussion of quality and validity as it applies in this study using the applied criteria common to IPA. Overall, IPA is the best methodological fit for this thesis and the research design has been accomplished accordingly and highlights some original findings that contribute to knowledge as highlighted in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter Four

Presentation and discussion of the findings

4 Introduction

The research was carried out with the overall aim of understanding how owner-managers of scale-up companies in the North-West of England thrive at work. This chapter presents the experiences of the owner-managers that emerged during the interview process and explicates both the processes and content dimensions on how owner-managers thrive at work. The interplay between thriving at work for the owner-manager and the extant research surrounding the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) underpins the whole discussion in this chapter. The combination of these findings addresses the fundamental concern that an understanding of how thriving at work is experienced by owner-managers is required so that they can be supported in their pursuits. The knowledge and insights gained from their experiences can also enrich the eco-system of scale-up companies in the UK and add to the body of literature on thriving at work.

The participants were drawn from owners-managers of scale-up organisations who were identified as thriving using measures suggest by Porath et al. (2012), and who self-selected to take part in the research. The chapter starts with a presentation of an overview of the themes identified with regard to the owner-managers' thriving at work in light of pre-existing literature and the taxonomy used by them when articulating that experience. The chapter presents how owner-managers encourage thriving in their organisation and finally discusses some a posteriori insight arrived at from dialogues with the owner-managers to highlight some distinctive features of thriving for this set of individuals.

The research utilised a phenomenological interview to develop a deep understanding of how owner-managers thrive at work. The experience of the owner-managers illustrates that thriving at work is a complex phenomenon that can have a serious and positive impact on numerous aspects of the owner-manager's life. Following a thorough analysis of the interview transcripts three main themes were identified. These were identified based on their prevalence in the transcripts alongside the

individual accounts that captured a unique and in-depth perspective. Each theme is introduced and summarised, with evidence provided through verbatim quotes from the owner-managers who participated in the study to allow the owner-managers' voice to be heard and add a richness to the research. Each owner-manager is identified by an acronym as discussed in Chapter Three. Quotes are signified either by indented, italicised text, or by the use of quotation marks where they appear in the main text.

The themes and their sub-themes are as follows:

Theme 1: What the lived experience of thriving at work looks like for an owner-manager in relation to the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005):

Sub-themes:

Happiness, energy and development

Agentic behaviours

Contextual features and resources

Theme 2: How owner-managers encourage thriving within their organisations:

Sub-themes

Sense of community

Recruitment and team building

Theme 3: Distinctive features of the owner-manager's thriving and how this set of individuals could be supported as they grow their business:

Sub-themes

Intertwinedness

Speed of change

Educators and policymakers

Whilst these findings have been structured in discrete categories, under the topics of the areas discussed in the interviews with the owner-managers, but it should be recognised that all of the themes presented are interrelated to varying degrees, with the words of organisation and business, employees and staff used interchangeably. This section seeks to explicate the multifaceted and interdependent nature of those themes. Each subordinate theme and inter-related sub-theme are now explored in turn.

4.1 Owner-manager's lived experience of thriving at work

These owner-managers had not been given the formal Spreitzer et al. (2005) definition of thriving at work, but they had completed a questionnaire based around the themes of vitality and learning, so it could have been expected that this vocabulary may have been used in the description of the main dimensions of thriving at work by the owner-managers. In line with the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) the owner-managers from their discussion of their experiences of thriving at work recognised that this state is not a static emotion but one which fluctuates over time and it would appear that for owner-managers their thriving was aided by high levels of learning and energy, as suggested by Porath et al. (2012), Spreitzer et al. (2013), and Spreitzer et al. (2012), but for owner-managers happiness would need to be added as a third dimension.

4.1.1 *Happiness*

To thrive in their demanding and stressful roles, the owner-managers felt they had to be happy in what they were doing on a daily basis. The frequency supports the earlier work of Niessen et al. (2012), and Prem et al. (2017), who concluded that thriving, unlike resilience, can be a daily occurrence without the need for adversity and individuals were happier when they had a sense they were performing well (Fisher, 2010). When each owner-manager described their experience there was a heightened sense of passion in their voice and two of the owner-managers saw this enjoyment as a necessary balance against the stress of their role. The lived experience of thriving at work for the owner-manager was:

“In very simple terms, being excited about coming in the next day” (003)

“getting up in the morning and looking forward to the day, being happy in what you do otherwise the stress would be too much” (002)

“probably two things, high performance mixed with actually being happy..... I feel you can perform really well and get good results, but it would be a massive stress if it wasn't enjoyable” (004)

One owner-manager described thriving as giving her a sense of aliveness, *“I love a day when I am buzzing”* (008).

4.1.2 Energy

One of the main dimensions in the theoretical model of the thriving at work is vitality, being described as energy, spirit and aliveness (Spreitzer et al., 2005). The owner-managers described this dimension as energy and did not use the word vitality. For the owner-managers this dimension of the model is used to give their thriving a forward momentum and is utilised to help them and their businesses develop:

“Two (aspects) really define that (thriving) for me and one is energy and the other is change” (003)

As such, energy management plays an important role for owner-managers as they thrive at work, as energy is the fuel which helps them run their organisations effectively, (Fritz et al., 2016). The owner-managers in this research all had high levels of energy which aided their thriving. These high energy levels allow them to use short periods of time to restore expended energy and retain their vigour, (Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008). The energy levels were demonstrated by the ability of the owner-managers being on constant alert for, and the energy to pursue, new opportunities to explore and conquer.

All of the owner-managers, apart from one, had grown their businesses from initial conception to their current size, but all were a pivotal and integral part of the organisation. Their position gives them the ability to influence and shape the culture of the organisation from a position of authority. As such, and in line with previous research, (Inceoglu et al., 2018; Spreitzer et al., 2012; Weigl et al., 2010) the owner-manager recognised that their mood can affect their staff, their actions were seen as social signals, and their inherent energy was contagious to those around them:

“I think if I am enthusiastic and I enjoy what I do, I think that helps with my design teamI think with my energy and spirit I have got a good aura around me so, when things are good, I am probably the best person to be

around as I make everybody enthusiastic, but when things are bad, I am not the best person” (002)

“I always hope that I have energy and spirit at work I think as a leader you need to be showing energy, even if you do not feel like that every day you need to go in and show that energy, that passion every day..... If you don’t have it then people around you drop a level, their energy goes low as well, and they sort of feed off you” (008)

Being conscious of the impact of their energy levels and mood could have on others the owner-managers had developed strategies for periods of low energy:

“I think sometimes when the pressure is on, I can close off and people realise that something is odd shall we say?” (007)

The owner-managers discussed implementing strategies to ensure their energy was maintained. These included purposefully staying away from staff by working from home, connecting with peers outside the organisation in their support circles and doing physical activities:

“I’d rather stay away than flounder a bit in the office and look a bit demotivated. I’d rather be de-motivated on my own and not influence anyone else.... so, it’s the effect of that on other people, just the presence and the energy, and in the work itself if you are not 100% energetic” (004)

Three of the owner-managers discussed physical activities that they did to help them thrive through the heightened energy levels that the physical activity gave them, as well as the opportunity to re-focus their thoughts to maintain a positive mental attitude that they felt essential in order to thrive. In addition to the physical activities, owner-managers liked making a positive impact and being appreciated by their staff and customers. This drove them to create a community of like-minded people which would support them and become an energy source for them. The owner-managers described being energised by:

“Building a team, people around me who support that kind of attitude everyone kind of working towards similar goals that gives me energy”
(003)

“When people are making amazing progress independent of me that is just when I feel the most energetic I want to build an organisation that allows people to thrive really, so I want processes in place where people have autonomy, mastery and purpose” (004)

Having a sense of purpose was not only energising for the owner-manager but acted as a motivator as they felt they were doing the right thing. This sense was not only derived from external stakeholders to the organisation, customers and funders, but also internal from their staff as the latter re-enforced the owner-manager’s belief that they were building a solid business with a strong team, which generated more energy:

“When you get feedback from the staff to say, that’s gone well, I am really happy with that change, so it is the feedback from the teams or the individuals” (008)

When activities involve learning to overcome challenges or develop the business it can add meaning to the owner-manager’s work and gave them a sense of growth, both on a personal and organisational level, which generated more energy (Fritz et al., 2011; Spreitzer et al., 2012). However, the owner-managers were also conscious of activities which would drain them of energy and openly discussed being selective in the choice of interactions they had to main their energy levels. Two owner-managers discussed how they took actions to avoid negative people, they found ways to buffer the de-energising effects of negative members of their staff by shaping their work environment to meet their personal needs, (Gerbasi et al., 2015; Schippers & Hogenes, 2011; Spreitzer et al., 2005), and so conserving their energy to work on business challenges. The owner-managers sited negative attitudes amongst staff as the biggest hindrance to their thriving and had a positive dislike for negative people and saw them as energy drains. One of the owner-managers referred to these

members of staff as “*energy vampires*” (001), who were draining not only to their team but also the owner-manager, who would purposefully avoid them if they could:

“I want to be around people with energy..... I want people around me to take it if I have something positive to give.....I definitely cannot be around people who don’t have an ambition or have got no energy, I just can’t be around them” (006)

Spreitzer et al. (2012) advocated that thriving at work is enhanced when individuals can be authentic at work and their energy is expended when they are surface actors, (Uy et al., 2017). Although the owner-managers were thriving at work there were times when they were not authentic. They saw themselves as positive role models for their staff and would act in accordance with their perception of this role and with a level of energy they thought befitted the role.

4.1.3 *Development*

The owner-managers enjoyed the feeling of advancement both of themselves and their business, aligning to self-development theory which is one of the underlying theories of the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005). The owner-managers demonstrated that they had a positive and a pre-disposition for learning which helped them overcome challenges, releasing energy resources to grow their business. Owner-manager 008 said thriving was clearly linked to an individual’s advancement, “*When I thrive, I feel that I am developing, I feel that I am learning, I feel that I’m not stagnating*”. This development related to being pushed out of their comfort zone, “*thriving is growing, thriving is being busy, thriving is moving up a step*” (007), and for the owner-manager this gave them energy due to the desire to advance. When the owner-managers were specifically asked to describe how they experienced learning, they saw it as developing on a continual daily basis, using resources both internal and external to their organisation:

“I think the opportunity to learn is high and if you grasp that you can learn all the time” (004)

Although these owner-managers were running successful scale-up companies they did not presume that they knew everything or had reached a saturation point with regard to learning:

“I find myself learning often. I am a sponge, I am constantly trying to learn, I don’t have this ego that thinks I know it all already” (007)

In fact, learning came across in the discussions as the stronger of the two main dimensions of the theoretical model, with the owner-managers discussing that they learnt on a daily basis and for one when this ends it will be the day that she will be no longer in business, for her *“I do see myself as a continual learner, I have basically said that day I stop learning is the day I die” (008).*

For the owner-managers learning was a real strength and was described as:

“a thirst for information I am constantly reading up on stuff related to the business.... I think it is important to keep learning and keep developing to be able to keep the company moving forward and keep growing and enter new markets or maximise existing markets. I think it is really crucial to keep developing as a person anyway” (005)

This learning characteristic of the owner-managers supports their thriving. The owner-managers in the main were paratelic learners with an innate curiosity and strong determination to overcome obstacles, loving the process of learning new things, as well as the end result (Salerno, 2009). In line with pedagogical research there was not one environment for learning or one learning style for these individuals. For some they found their learning from within the organisation, from their work, or those around them:

“we are learning continuously ... in the business I think I am learning from my junior staff.... I am learning from everyday problems” (006)

But, for others learning was external to their work environment, from formal courses, both in the classroom and online, and from their networks:

“When I am out of the office, certain courses weren’t the greatest, but I learnt more from just mingling with other businesses, irrelevant what they do, yes, definitely out of the office” (007)

Some owner-managers were one of a small management team which could potentially limit the expertise in the organisation, so learning was at a very practical level where they learnt from their peers in their network groups..... *“I am in Vxxxx (a network group in the NW England), and we have a speaker once a month and we have a round the table discussion about each other’s problems” (001)*. In line with the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005), owner-managers demonstrated that they were self-learners and were in a position to shape their environment which allowed them to try new things, develop mastery, as their businesses grew. From the discussion with these individuals, it would appear that the owner-managers have higher level learning skills which allows the transference of learning between situations and contexts:

“I have an unhealthy obsession for work and improving and looking at new information.....I am constantly trying to find more information and learn about the different things related to the business” (005)

The implementation of the results of their learning can create a sense of satisfaction and a release of energy which supports the owner-manager thriving and gives them a momentum for more learning, thus adding to their self-belief and helping them overcome any self-doubt when faced with a challenge, supporting the earlier research by Carmeli et al. (2009) and Kabat-Farr & Cortina, (2017). For one owner-manager when she was faced with a challenge, she would just give it a go and was not afraid of failure, illustrating the inner determination of this set of owner-managers:

“When I get some challenge, I will go for it really.... you know things like these will give me a bit of a buzz rather than getting me down, I say ok, I am going to try” (006)

The owner-manager had a positive and learning mindset, with the implementation of their accomplishments giving them an innate satisfaction which released energy for further learning, which fuelled their thriving, thus supporting the earlier research of Niessen et al. (2012). Whilst the research of Prem et al. (2017), found “that challenge stressors have a positive total effect on learning, but no total effect on vitality,” whereas (*pace*) owner-managers were in a constant state of over-coming challenges by learning and this was a major theme in the owner-managers’ experience that added to their thriving at work, as it energised the owner-manager and became a job resource, aligning to the work of Korunka et al. (2015).

The owner-managers portrayed self-belief, and this allowed them to see problems and challenges with positive affect which contributes to their thriving (Paterson et al., 2014). One of the owner-managers discussed his experience of development of a new department in his organisation as.... “*it didn’t feel like a massive challenge, it was exciting and interesting, but it all came from a tiny little bit of wonder about how did XYZ become so successful?*” (005). This emanated from his innate sense of curiosity which drove him on. Another owner-manager stated he had purposely set up his business to do things differently which brought with it its own creative challenges to overcome, which fuelled his thriving and enjoyment at work. How the owner-managers see challenges significantly impacts their thriving (Schabram & Maitlis, 2017), especially as these challenges will amplify over time (Spreitzer et al., 2012), resonating with owner-manager (004) who said as the business is growing “*There is more cognitive power needed all of the time.*”

Owner-managers had created organisational environments in which they can flourish, aligning the organisation with their personal and professional values and goals. For employees they have the potential to exist at work, whereas for an owner-manager of a growing business this is not possible as they are continually faced with business challenges and have the responsibility for resolving them. The owner-managers relished the opportunity to overcome strategic challenges to advance them and their business, but recognised that at times challenges could become a hindrance especially if there were too many “*there are always problems, but I don’t like it or feel that energetic when there are fifty things to fix*” (004), or if those challenges were too operational as these negatively impacted on their ability to thrive as they

prevented the owner-manager from pursuing their preferred strategic and creative endeavours:

“We don’t have a massive management structure, so we are quite ground level, so everyone sort of comes to us for guidance about their jobs, I get dragged into challenging stuff at an operational level, so that feels if it is holding me back a little bit.... So, then I spend most of my spare time doing the research” (005)

Nevertheless, the main hindrances to thriving for the owner-managers were primarily staff-related. The owner-managers themselves have a heightened sense of positive attitude, self-belief and determination to overcome obstacles which allowed them to thrive at work. These traits meant they found it hard to have empathy with, or understand, staff who did not want to grow and develop. As discussed above the owner-managers had a positive dislike for negative members of staff and this hindrance was intensified if there were disagreements amongst team members. The owner-managers recognised that disagreements were going to happen in a team of different personalities but felt resentful when they had to re-direct their personal energy to resolve disputes before it negatively impacted on their business. The strength of feeling regarding these negative issues was heightened as it implicitly undermined the sense of community the owner-manager was striving to create for their staff.

4.1.4 *Agentic behaviours of the Thriving at Work model*

The T@W model includes three agentic behaviours of task focus, exploration, and heedful relating, with an increased likelihood of an individual thriving at work when they engage in these behaviours. However, when the owner-managers discussed the agentic behaviours their articulation differed from those proposed by Spreitzer et al. (2005).

4.1.4.1 *Task focus*

The owner-manager had limited time in the workplace to experience task focus in the strictest sense. The owner-manager described their role as having a wide job remit and whilst the theory reads in the singular, for these individuals it can be seen

as a plural interpretation with task focus at work being an umbrella description to cover all of the sub-tasks involved in running a growing business, described by the owner-managers as ‘juggling’ lots of balls at once and still being in control. As discussed in a later section on work ‘spill-over’ the singular interpretation of task focus is when the owner manager works at home on new products, or markets, or researching to resolve business challenges. Doing this gives the owner-manager positive meaning, is engrossing, and allows the owner-manager to experience the concept of ‘flow’ at work, devoting time to advancing their business, employing their greatest strengths and skills to meet challenges (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, as cited by Spreitzer, 2005).

Task focus, singular and multiple, allows the owner-manager to develop and learn new competencies giving them a sense of advancement, adding to their experience of thriving by avoiding feelings of stagnation and incompetence from not learning, (Paterson et al., 2014; Porath et al., 2012). The owner-managers came across as relishing being stretched and having to grow in new directions as their organisations grew aided by their inner-belief and self-determination:

4.1.4.2 *Exploration*

The owner-managers in their dialogue did not use the term exploration as per the theoretical T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005), but unconsciously substituted this with the analogy of being creative and innovative to overcome the challenges and hurdles their businesses faced, pushing the boundaries of their learning, undertaking research and reflection to find solutions. The owner-managers savoured the process of resolving the challenges their businesses faced, being able to self-adapt in line with their strengths, and being in a position to put processes in place to implement their innovations:

“I have always been interested in change and the lifeblood of the business since I set it up is always about doing things differently from the way other people do it and new thingsIt was difficult at first, but it fairly quickly became another creative challenge for me and is what drives me, is creative challenges” (003)

Whilst individuals do not need challenges to thrive at work, the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) assumes that individuals have an innate predisposition to learn which they need to do to conquer new challenges that subsequently leads to eudiamonic and hedonic pleasure. Challenges appear to energise the owner-managers and although the excited intonation in their voice cannot be evidenced in this written thesis, the author can report a definite excitement and passion as the owner-managers spoke on this subject which added a richness to the dialogue. For one owner-manager (003), he described his ideal day as *“starting with what seems like an insurmountable problem and finding a solution to that through learning.....so long as there is enough new stuff going on and we are doing things differently that gives me a real energy and even if that’s not physical it gives me energy, it gives me mental energy and excitement around what we are doing”*. This attitude adds to the owner-manager’s thriving as it supports both dimensions of the model, learning and vitality, as they produce positive energy from developing in new directions (Sonenshein, 2014) and have a further release of energy from self-fulfilment (Spreitzer et al., 2011). The outlook also supports the research of Carmeli & Spreitzer (2009) and Prem et al. (2017) as the owner-managers are demonstrating higher levels of innovative behaviour and gaining a sense of forward and upward momentum which adds to their thriving, attributes affiliated to one who is promotion seeking, motivated, and determined (Spreitzer et al., 2005; Wallace et al., 2016).

4.1.4.3 *Heedful relating*

The original definition of heedful relating as cited by Spreitzer et al. (2005 p.540) is “when individuals operate attentively to those around them, we say they are heedfully relating” (Weick & Roberts, 1993) and in a work context “employees look out for one another by subordinating their idiosyncratic intentions to the effective functioning of the system” (Weick & Roberts, 1993). The original research by Weick & Roberts, (1993), which underpinned this third agentic behaviour, considered heedful ‘interrelating’ amongst flight attendants and the concept of the collective mind. They found that there is an ongoing variation in heed with which individual contributions, representations, and subordinations are interrelated influences for the comprehension of unfolding events.

However, the owner-managers' experience of heedful relating did not strictly support this definition. Whilst they had a strong team ethos and were very protective of their teams, they choose their team to suit the activities they wished their business to be engaged in. By choosing their staff, often through informal mechanisms to suit the culture of the organisation, and aligning recruitment to the values they had set to underpin their organisation, owner-managers enhance their thriving by setting the vision for their organisation which gives them positive meaning, which 'promotes' their idiosyncratic intentions and they used their power to change the team if they felt it was not working. The owner-managers saw negative members of staff or non-team players as a hindrance to their own thriving and the thriving of their organisation and took action to address this:

"I try to avoid them and to avoid them I get rid of them, so if they are too negative and I am having to spend too much of my time with them I just get rid of them. This is not that type of company....I say, "if I have to stand over you then you are no good to me" (001)

They did not discuss or give examples where they subordinated their idiosyncratic intentions. There was a strong sense of what 'they want', and how they took actions to ensure that their views and vision penetrated down the organisation, leading to an annoyance when it did not, *"It frustrates me, and hence why we have made some changes, as every manager hasn't been strong enough to challenge their staff... that's what I want" (008)*

4.1.5 Contextual features and resources

The T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) contains reference to a number of contextual features that can support an individual's thriving at work. Whilst some, such as decision-making discretion, one of the most powerful antecedents for thriving, (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2013), naturally exist in the owner-managers role, some features are not seen as appropriate from the dialogue with this set of owner-managers. The owner-managers have significant control over the level and extent of the information sharing in their organisations and put processes in place to develop cultures based on trust and were adversely affected by negative employees who de-energised them and acted as a hindrance to their thriving at work.

From this analysis it would appear that the contextual features for this set of owner-managers are autonomy and decision-making discretion, broad information sharing, trust, and positive employees.

In addition to the contextual features to support their thriving the owner-managers are able to experience higher levels of thriving by drawing on their internal resources of knowledge, positive meaning, positive affective resources, and relational resources. These different resources supported the owner-manager at different periods to create positive spirals in line with the earlier research of Sekerka et al. (2011), Schaufeli et al. (2009), and align with the conceptual model. The original T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) was extended to include psychological capital as a resource and supervisor support as a contextual feature following the research of Patterson et al. (2014). The owner-manager displayed high levels of psychological capital but in the main did not have any form of supervisor support as they were the majority shareholders.

As may be expected, the majority of the owner-managers said that they received their support either from their team and/or family. None of the owner-managers mentioned having a mentor or a coach, and apart from one owner-manager whose father was a non-executive director, there was no form of management overseeing these owner-managers. As the businesses grew the owner-managers had crafted their roles and developed their networks thereby utilising their high-quality connections to facilitate their thriving (Kabat-Farr & Cortini, 2017; Uy et al., 2017). These connections were both internal in the organisations with their teams and external in their business network groups and educational cohorts. These external interactions allow owner-managers to discuss ideas and issues with like-minded others. Extant research to date, (Spreitzer et al., 2012; Porath et al., 2010), suggests that to thrive at work individuals need an environment based on trust so they can be authentic, for the owner-managers in this study authenticity tended to be outside their organisations as they felt internally they were role models for their staff and lived their perception of that role:

“I have a few people that I class are friends ... if I have had a really bad day and I will ring them up and I will say “I have had a shit day, how’s your day

been?” it’s quite a new thing and its working because it’s better to do that because you can’t do it in work” (001)

From his educational cohorts’ owner-manager (007) found that they *“all look out for each other.....some people have gone out of business and doing whatever at home, we still keep touch whether its FB or LinkedIn, we still keep an eye out for them.”*

As can be seen from the above section owner-managers in general align to a majority of the principles of the T@W model proposed by Spreitzer et al. (2005) but the labels in the model needs to be adapted to align with the taxonomy used, and interpretations given, by the owner-managers.

4.2 How owner-managers encourage thriving within their organisation

Owner-managers have a pivotal position in their organisations to ensure it has long-term sustainability by ensuring they themselves thrive on an individual level and they create an organisation that encourage thriving in their employees. Following is a discussion of the type of organisation these owner-managers are trying to create for their staff and the processes that they have put in place to support thriving as the business grows.

4.2.1 Sense of community

The owner-managers’ thriving at work was amplified when they were making a positive impact and they aimed to create positive work environments in which they can counter burnout by being happy on a daily basis, which allows them and their employees to develop both personally and professionally, (Porath & Spreitzer, 2012), adding to a sense of community in the organisation. During the interviews three owner-managers specifically asked the interviewer if she had experienced a sense of positivity in the atmosphere when she had walked through their organisation. The owner-managers aimed to craft a positive environment with shared positive meaning by regularly conversing with staff and setting a positive tone. Owner-manager (008) said that she spent *“half a day a week walking round the office and chatting to people”* in order to get to know her staff.

The closeness of the relationship between the owner-manager and their employees can increase the sense of purpose for both parties, fulfilling social and emotional needs, (Madden et al., 2015). Asplund & Blacksmith, (2011), Donaldson & Ko, (2010) Onorato & Zhu, (2014), propose that when a leader, such as the owner-manager, takes an interest in the employee it allows for knowledge exchange and gives the employees a sense that the leader cares about them at work, with a resultant pay back of increased work ethic, enthusiasm, and commitment to the organisation as they were treated as a person and not a commodity and this builds a sense of community in which the employees work. It was apparent that the owner-managers were very supportive and protective of their teams. This support was evidenced by daily and purposeful interfaces with staff and by the owner-managers acting quickly to resolve issues that upset the equilibrium of their organisation in order to maintain a positive work environment. This could go some way to explain why the owner-managers experienced adverse emotions when employees were negative, or teams were disrupted through disagreements, as the negativity was seen as undermining to the sense of community and strong teams the owner managers were trying to build within their organisations.

All of the owner-managers said that their staff knew the direction the business was growing in, either through formal or informal communications. The organisations were relatively small, with the owner-managers still heavily involved which resulted in them interacting with their staff on a daily basis informally to more formal mechanisms such as monthly personal development reviews. The owner-managers recognised that this communication allowed them to inter-relate with their staff, developing a two-way relationship, learning from them, relaying information to them, and allowing them to embed the cultural values into the organisation through their conversations. One owner-manager discussed having daily huddles with staff and having a WhatsApp group across different work premises which increased information exchanges between her and her employees, and the employees themselves, which increased their connectivity and indebtedness, (Farh et al., 2011).

Whilst Spitzmuller and Van Dyne (2013) may question the motivations for performing these interactions, as proactive activities can be seen to be done for self-interest and personal well-being. The owner-managers believed this level of

interaction supported a sense of community in the organisation. They believed that by creating a supportive working environment it created a thriving environment where employees made friends at work and knew that they were part of a 'bigger' picture. However, two of the owner-managers, from more established manufacturing businesses, recognised that their approach when talking to staff had to be adaptable. They felt the older men who had been in manufacturing for over thirty years, or the ones who worked for their 'wage packet' at the end of the week, needed a different approach to the more career-oriented members of staff, with one of the owner-managers describing this part of her role as being like a chameleon.

The owner-managers felt that they benefit from learning at a personal level and wanted to share this experience with their staff. In accord with the research of Korunka et al. (2015) the owner-managers saw employee development as a means to increase job satisfaction, so encouraged staff to grow on a daily basis and had practices in place to support that growth by trying to develop a learning mind-set amongst her employees thus fulfilling one of the dimensions of the T@W model:

"I think all this interactive stuff does help the staff as well to grow.....you have to train them, you have to talk to them, and get them through the training by talking to them about what we want, what our values are, and it is continuous thing.....it is almost every day or week" (006)

Other owner-managers had included mechanisms that allowed staff to understand and learn the full process that they were part of so they could see the end product that the organisation delivered. For owner-manager (004), it meant aligning the personal and career direction of his staff with the vision of the organisation, embedding the organisation's values into the leadership programmes he was developing, making the human resource processes purposeful and meaningful. This owner-manager was very people focused and recognised that his employees influenced each other in the team so he saw the alignment of values as significant. Aiming to create a sense of community may contribute to the low levels of staff turnover across all of these organisations (Madden et al., 2015). Each of the owner-managers said that they thought their employees were thriving and had the opportunity to thrive at work, although none had measured the thriving of their

employees or asked them if they were. The owner-managers used staff turnover and staff engagement as a basis for their conclusions:

“At one-point engagement wasn’t so high and that was one of my key indicators. I would say ‘look what is going on in these teams’ I wouldn’t use the word thriving, but obviously they aren’t thriving if they are not happy with something going on” (008)

The low staff turnover supports the work of Porath et al. (2012) as this was seen as an indicator of a civil place to work, one based on trust and support, and characterised by motivated individuals, who are energetic and developing, so increasing the human capital of the organisation. Although the owner-manager did not use the word trust in their dialogue, they clearly felt a psychological contract with their employees. The relationship between the owner-managers and their staff can be multi-faceted and often dynamic but one in which both can thrive in (Kark, 2011; Mishra & Mishra, 2011). When a psychological contract is developed based on trust and support, the employee receives a sense that leader is showing compassion and openness, which fuels the employee’s thriving and for the owner-manager they receive a sense of appreciation from their employees. This two-way relationship gives a strong basis for a sense of community in the organisation, which extends to a collective thriving, as employees work collaboratively in their teams increasing energy through positive emotions and a sense of meaning (Fritz et al., 2011). The owner-managers discussed how they supported their staff by encouraging them to develop, looked for ways to manage them effectively by recognising the needs of different roles and generations.

Each of the owner-managers reported that they employed a variety of different age ranges which meant that they had to manage and address the different inter-generational demands. However, only two discussed how they experienced intergenerational issues, one with regard to how to manage the different staff members and the other with regard to change. The two owner-managers felt that the younger members of staff required more reassurance and more ‘stroking’ than their older members of staff, but these younger members had more natural enthusiasm and were more adept at agile working (Nolan, 2015). The older generation had more

experience and knowledge but could be more resistant to change, so a balance of ages had to be accommodated within the modern organisation. Interestingly these two owner-managers had implemented positive processes to support their older members of staff. One of the owner-managers (001), who ran an engineering company, reported that for her she had to work hard to retain the older generation to keep their skills in the organisation and as such had implemented a staged retirement process, which helped her, and them, make the transition into their retirement. The other owner-manager had allowed their elderly office workers to work part-time in the business and were still at work despite being in their seventies, for which they repaid the organisation and the owner-manager with loyalty and dedication.

For all of the owner-managers their thriving at work was amplified when they were making a positive impact and felt they were giving positive meaning to their staff, allowing them to thrive at work. This could go some way to explain why the owner-managers experienced adverse emotions when employees were negative, or teams were disrupted through disagreements as they felt this showed a lack of appreciation and added to the owner-manager's stress levels when they had to resolve staff issues.

4.2.2 Recruitment and team building

The organisations were at different stages in their growth journey, with the owner-managers describing having to evolve from a one-man band to an organisation with a few employees but who still always look to the owner-manager for advice and guidance giving them a central role. However, the owner-managers recognised that as the business grew further, they have to learn to delegate this decision-making so that they could move to a more strategically focused position. For most that transition was the hardest stage, both for them as individuals and their organisations, with the owner-manager often feeling the need to meddle with operations, whilst at the same time recognising this is not appropriate for their staff and it could hinder the growth of their business. Thus, extending the research of Kabat-Farr & Cortina (2017) on organisational citizenship who considered some of the unintended consequences of citizenship. In addition, for owner-managers during this phase it is important for them to recognise that this is a period of fluidity which results in them having to learn to manage their employees and feel in control of multiple things at once:

“I must admit that I am in a phase now that I am struggling a little bit to juggle all the balls that I used to juggle quite well, because I have extra staff which bring on extra problems in a way, nice stuff as well” (007)

Fortunately, in line with the work of Patterson et al. (2014), the owner-managers from the discussion demonstrated an abundance of psychological capital and are able to draw on high levels of hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism helping them overcome challenges as they grew their businesses and support their thriving.

Whilst a majority of the owner-managers interviewed still had a daily involvement in the technical aspects of the business, two of the owner-managers of the more established businesses did not. One because she had taken over the role from her father, so she had always been more strategic and the second, because the business had grown to the point where he described himself as a facilitator in the organisation as his own technical knowledge had become outdated, *“20 years ago I probably knew more about everything we did because it was all about design, I guess what has changed for me is that I have gone from knowing the most in the team to being arguably the person who knows the least in the team” (003)*. This evolution of the business allowed the owner-manager to craft their roles to suit them personally adding to their thriving and keeps their interest in their work.

The owner-managers have a self-awareness and are visionaries who have the energy and stamina to push their ideas forward which makes them competent in what they do and have personalities to overcome challenges (Steckler & Waddock, 2018). As the business grows the owner-managers had to develop a transformational leadership style to guide their organisation and put the changes in place for their next growth period, creating a vision of the future for their employees so they can foster learning and vitality for the long-term sustainability of the organisation. These owner-managers aim to engage their employees in learning but recognised that for some this was not appropriate due to their learning disposition, or lack of appetite for expanding their knowledge, and whilst they struggled to comprehend this, the owner-managers recognised that when they were managing staff, they had to be adaptable.

Each owner-manager recognised the strength of having a good team in their organisation as this supported the owner-manager's thriving and it created a sense of community for the employees. The owner-managers excerpts highlighted a range of different processes that were in place to help the employees thrive and feel part of the organisation, with some recognising that they could do even more. The owner-managers had built organisations that reflects the type of organisation they want to run. They want to be surrounded by staff who wanted to work towards the same goals as them as this gave the owner-manager energy and gave the employees positive meaning as their work was aligned to the organisation's objectives. The owner-managers are heavily involved in the recruitment processes of their organisations which tends to be on an informal basis, focused closely on cultural fit to support the values of the organisation that had been set by the owner-manager, on the applicant's attitude, with the aim of protecting the existing teams:

"I was saying this the other day to someone that we don't recruit roles here, we recruit people, because the culture of the company is really, really important" (003)

"We are very value based, like, we have company values and we look for those in our hiring process..... we try to hire for values and feel" (004)

By recruiting and developing staff based on values aligned to the individual's strengths and the ethos of the organisation the owner-managers are creating organisational resources, (Kira & Balkin, 2014), that allows the employees to see how they are aligned to the values and the priorities of the organisation, (Spreitzer et al., 2012; Porath & Spreitzer, 2012), adding to the sense of community based on shared values and goal alignment.

This approach to employee selection has been extended to the appointment of managers in the organisation. The owner-managers were very conscious that as their organisations grew, they had to employ managers that had the capability to disseminate the owner-manager's vision. The owner-managers saw this as a critical appointment as the managers they employed were responsible for upholding the culture of the organisation. They recognised that these managers needed to be trained

to support the other employees so they all could deliver on the vision of the organisation. One of the owner-managers (008) said she had moved away from ‘accidental’ managers based on timeserving to one based on ‘best-fit’ for the organisation:

A further challenge for owner-managers is how to maintain the carefully developed sense of company community as their organisations grow. For the owner-manager they have to transcend into a more strategic role, and they have to employ managers who have the same commitment to maintaining a sense of community as them and to keep learning. To date, as the organisations had grown the owner-managers had tried to instil the organisation’s values and processes into their management teams to ensure the organisation was sustainable in the way the owner-manager wanted it to be. This meant that managers would have to respond positively to change as it is an important feature of a growing business. As such, these organisations need to have managers who see it as a role to be learnt, as this will give them an increased propensity to thrive and a greater commitment to the organisation, (Schabram & Maitlis, 2017). This view aligns to the work of Cullen, (2015) who found that to be effective, managers need to have a high level of cognitive ability and selecting individuals with positive self-evaluation traits and who demonstrate positive attributes can increase collective thriving (Walumbwa et al., 2017).

When owner-managers are thriving it can be infectious to those around them and aid the collective thriving of the organisation which is important for growing companies as they will be continually faced with challenges so need employees who are thriving, working in an environment with contextual features, which includes supervisor support, and encourages the development of personal resources which can be accessed during periods of change.

4.3 Distinctive features of the owner-manager’s thriving and how this set of individuals could be supported as they grow their business

Owner-managers have a unique role in their businesses as they have an integral part of the business and ultimate responsibility for the continued existence of the business. As such, the discussions with this set of individuals highlighted some

distinctive attributes of their thriving. The following section highlights the owner-managers' view of the intertwinedness between them and their business, their attitude to and speed of change, and some areas educators and policymakers could reflect upon when considering this set of individuals.

4.3.1 *Intertwined*

Owner-managers 'live and breathe' their business and a distinctive theme that was uncovered in this research was the extent of intertwinedness the owner-manager had with his/her business, with regard to their identity and the spill-over between home life and work life. The owner-managers saw their personal thriving dependent on their perception of how well they felt their business was thriving:

"If the business thrives, I thrive, so long as I don't sink, because if the business struggles, I struggle, intertwined is the word" (007)

Performing well for owner-managers was measured in terms of the success of their businesses, demonstrating how the owner-manager identifies themselves through their business:

"Certainly, from my perspective being an owner manager I feel very interwoven with the business, the business's success is also my success, and the business's growth and development is also my growth and development I think those two trajectories are quite aligned" (004)

The owner-managers were motivated by a sense that they were progressing, both at a personal and organisational level with their thriving enhanced when a person has found a work role that they are personally aligned to, one in which they can grow, and are happy in pursuing:

"I am in a good place and I am happy with my work and I feel like I am progressing personally, but then the business results are what I want as well, being good" (004)

Whilst research work (Fritz et al., 2011; Hahn et al., 2012; Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008; Steckler & Waddock, 2018), considered the separate contexts, work and home, for energy regeneration, for this set of owner-managers the contexts were intertwined, they do not mentally compartmentalise work-life and home-life. One owner-manager commented:

“I don’t think any owner-manager is going to say to you that work is 9-5. Even if it is not apparent, I am always thinking about work in one shape or another, even when I am on holiday” (003)

All of the owner-managers had created an environment that was conducive to their overall thriving and this allowed them to increase the transference of this positive state between their working life and home life (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2012). The owner-managers openly discussed the ready acceptance and pleasure they experienced from using their private time to work on their business, owner-manager (002) said, *“You know unfortunately this is going to sound like a cliché, but this (my business) is my hobby”*. Their central role resulted in them having little time to work-on and think about their businesses whilst in their office, resulting in significant spill-over into their home-life, *“I am constantly turned on my relaxation is actually, sad as it sounds, is researching and reading and stuff like that I am always on Some of my best ideas are at home”* (005). This private-life learning adds to the owner-manager’s thriving by giving them a sense of mastery and control, reducing feelings of stagnation and shows how home becomes an environment for energy regeneration which is then transferred back to the business to help it develop, with an interrelatedness of emotional states’ cross contexts for these individuals, (Keeney & Ilies, 2011).

When an owner-manager is engrossed in their business it would appear that they are totally encapsulated by it and it encompasses all aspects of their life, work and private. However, for the owner-managers there were times when they would physically detach themselves from the workplace and had developed strategies to facilitate their thriving by boosting their energy. Owner-manager (004), discussed how he would intentionally remove himself from the workplace to reflect on challenges and clear their head to sustain themselves during demanding times. These

forms of activities help the individual overcome challenges and hurdles and achieve success in their work, (Steckler & Waddock, 2018).

4.3.2 *Attitude to, and speed of change*

The businesses in this research were all growing and evolving both as a result of, or reaction to, the changing economic, political, or technical landscape, or by being proactive when faced with business opportunities. However, it was their preferences for the rate of change that was unexpected and a second distinctive theme from the findings not previously identified in the literature search. The discussions highlighted that both male and female participants had similar facilitators and hinderances that enhanced or detracted from their thriving at work. All enjoyed the sense of self-development and advancement of themselves or their business through change but differed on the speed of that change. Male owner-managers discussed how they liked to overcome challenges and implement change quickly, with one stating he got frustrated and annoyed if progress is slow:

“If things stand still for any length of time, I get pretty frustrated and annoyed and that pushes me on..... I don’t think anything is not solvable in the long-term, but sometimes progress is a bit slow for me” (004)

Whereas the female owner-managers preferred a more cautious and reflective approach and were only committed to change after careful consideration, an aspect that could enhance understanding for the eco-system that looks to support scale-up companies in the UK. Female owner-managers commented:

“I just want to make the business as successful as possible, I don’t want to get to the stage where I take too much risk that I put everybody’s livelihood on the line, but equally no risk is the worst thing you can do, so I accept that... when I think am I making the right decisions, I am completely committed to it” (001)

“I have got an opportunity to acquire two more (shops), but I am just putting them on hold because I want to work on these (existing ones) and really make them quite profitable” (006)

Two of the owner-managers who had been in business for a number of years discussed how they had to re-adjust their business plan during an economic recession. They discussed how this had been one of their biggest challenges of their time in business and one which still appeared to haunt them to this day. It had been a big ‘wake-up call’ for one who had previously thought she would go on forever, and the other owner-manager described a period where he had developed some innovative technology but his customers, banks, were unwilling to purchase it as they had less appetite for risk due to the uncertain economic climate at the time, so on reflection the owner-manager now recognises that the speed of change for him has to be tempered to match the economic environment:

“I get bored quickly..... it helps us thrive in the good times, but it can be a threat as well in a recession”, (003)

So, whilst the owner-manager has a significant level of internal control and influence in their role which fuels their thriving, they also encounter external hindrances which they have had to learn to recognise and resolve to ensure that they are growing in an upward trajectory to facilitate more thriving at a pace suitable for them as individuals and their business.

4.3.3 Impact for educators and policymakers

The contextual features of an organisation for an owner-manager contain some different features due to their strategic position of influence. The owner-managers recognised that if they were going to continue to thrive as their business grew, they had to engage in supportive environments in which to be authentic and learn during that growth stage. This aspect is of importance to policy-makers and educators of owner-managers, not only do owner-managers have to be educated in regard to theory; they have to learn how to spot and resolve challenges, and be given the opportunity to engage in peer learning that then acts as a support mechanism for the individual. Basing the learning around the strengths of the owner-manager and using their taxonomy, with the educator being a facilitator, allows self-efficacy to increase which allows the owner manager to keep growing their business and taking it on an unknown journey. The owner-managers had all been on educational courses and discussed the support they received and gave to others in their cohorts. Taking a

reflective best-self approach to teaching would give owner-managers a heightened sense of agency based on their strengths (Spreitzer et al., 2009) leading to a sense of forward momentum and this approach can then be utilised in their organisations by them to help them recognise the strengths of their managers and employees. This would be a more progressive approach to staff management and development, that allows the owner-manager to be forward looking and consider the needs of the future of their organisation, them, and their employees and give them the resources to be effective in a changing landscape.

4.4 Conclusion

The deductions from the findings and associated discussions in relation to theory can be categorised as supportive of the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005), challenging the model when applied to owner-managers of scale-up companies, and finally revealing some unexpected outcomes. Whilst the owner-managers in this research study were thriving and supported the overall themes from the T@W model proposed by Spreitzer et al. (2005) the taxonomy they used to describe that experience differed from the model and there were nuances with regard to the application of certain aspects of the model for this set of individuals. Despite the many problems that running and growing their own organisation may hold for these owner-managers it had allowed them to thrive at work. They were self-learners with heightened levels of energy, who found support and guidance from their peers outside their organisation. Within their organisation they had been able to surround themselves with positive individuals, craft their roles that allowed them to continue to learn and overcome challenges, both of which energised them to move themselves and their organisations forward. These insights have underpinned the contribution to knowledge and practice that this study has achieved and are discussed in the subsequent chapter and support the recommendations for future research in this area.

Chapter Five

Conclusion to the thesis

5.0 Introduction

This final chapter synthesises the main conclusions and contributions to knowledge and practice that have been drawn from the research, along with the implications for future research into thriving at work for owner-managers and the impact on the author's own professional practice.

The research was carried out with the aim to critically examine and develop a deeper understanding of how owner-managers experience thriving at work in the context of scale-up companies in the North-West of England. The chapter considers where the conclusions drawn from the research are concurrent with extant literature and then where those conclusions depart from it to varying degrees, thereby adding knowledge to the construct of thriving at work and offering practical considerations for stakeholders of the scale-up eco-system in the UK to consider. The research used the T@W model proposed by Spreitzer et al. (2005) to underpin the research's aim and it utilised interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as its chosen methodology. This offered a new approach to the understanding of the construct and what it means for this set of individuals. The final section of the chapter includes a discussion of the limitations and, simultaneously, of the strengths of the research, and includes the reflections and reflexivity based on the diary notes of the researcher and how these reflections will add to the practice of the author both as an academic and mentor to small businesses. The diary notes are provided in first person and include what has been learned and in relation to IPA the effects the researcher has had on the process and what was done about this.

5.1 Contribution to knowledge and practice

The main aim of the research was supplemented by some objectives which are discussed below, highlighting how these have extended knowledge and practice in each area. The response to each objective is as follows:

5.1.1 *Objective: To critically evaluate the literature in the area of Thriving at Work in relation to owner-managers.*

The literature review considered the articles from 2005 that included a reference to the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005). A review of extant literature highlighted a research gap as this literature was primarily concerned with employees of organisations or post-graduate students based outside of the UK, (see appendix one table four). The literature review highlighted that a mix of methods had been used over the years since 2005 when the model was proposed, but not the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis as a method to gain an understanding of thriving at work, or any consideration of the experiences of owner-managers of scale-up companies in the UK. This is deemed important by the author if processes are to be put in place, based on understanding, to support owner-managers as they grow their businesses and positively contribute to the UK economy.

The owner-managers in the study were chosen as they all were thriving at work in line with the two dimensions of the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005). The owner-managers through their discussion highlighted their positive attitude which drove themselves and their business forward, with self-determination and an ability to self-adapt to challenge the status quo, seek out new opportunities to work, and grow in alignment of their preferred identity and perception of their role. This study allowed the owner-managers to talk about their experiences and in doing so highlighted subtle differences in the taxonomy used and their interpretations of aspects of the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005). The author would suggest that it is important in order to align theory and practical interpretation to increase understanding of the construct for this set of individuals. The most significant of those differences was with regard to the two dimensions of the model, vitality (feeling of aliveness and being energised at work) and learning (growth and getting better at what one does at work). For these owner-managers this terminology was nuanced, with vitality's definition being narrowed to energy and the definition of learning re-defined as self-development, in particular in relation to overcoming challenges and taking advantage of business opportunities. Existing research (Niessen et al., 2012; Prem et al., 2017) which validated the model found that thriving at work can be a daily experience when individuals are in an environment that supports their thriving, giving the

individual the opportunity to learn which positively impacted their vitality. These owner-managers extended this to include a further dimension of being happy on a daily basis which they felt was necessary to counter the additional stress associated with their role.

The owner-managers were in a prominent position whereby they could put processes in place that allowed them to attain their professional and personal goals, making work for them a place that they could live rather than just exist to support their thriving (Jiang, 2017). The T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) has three agentic behaviours which support the two dimensions of thriving at work. For owner-managers whilst the behavioural themes were similar there were distinctions which set them apart from the previous research undertaken with employees (Niessen et al. 2012; Porath et al., 2012; Prem et al., 2107). For owner-managers the descriptors were more specific to their role and situation. Firstly, the owner-managers discussed being multi-tasked focused whereas existing literature implies employees are task-focused giving the inference of the singular. Secondly, exploration came about through the necessity to carry out research and be creative to overcome challenges and be alert to new business opportunities. This exploratory activity subsequently released energy on the implementation of a successful outcome, thus aligning to the research of Niessen et al. (2012) and expansionist view on energy renewal (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al. 2012). However, for the owner-manager this exploration was often done away from the work environment and seen as essential in order to develop themselves and their business. Thirdly, the final agentic behaviour in the model was heedful relating, the model adopted the definition cited by Weick & Roberts, (1993), which describes the behaviour in a work context as “employees look(ing) out for one another by subordinating their idiosyncratic intentions to the effective functioning of the system”. Whilst the owner-managers undertook extensive staff engagement it was to allow them to manage effectively. The owner-managers did not discuss, or give examples of, subordinating their idiosyncratic intentions, placing less emphasis on collaboration, preferring to build a strong team to support them and working towards the goals of the organisation that the owner-managers had set, in the way the owner-manager wanted.

5.1.2 *Objective: To explore the lived experiences in the workplace of owner-managers in relation to the Thriving at Work model proposed by Spreitzer et al. (2005).*

In line with the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) the owner-managers saw thriving as a gauge and had techniques in order to self-regulate their energy and had an innate predisposition for learning and growing, which prevented feelings of stagnation and helped them overcome business challenges. This inclination for self-development allowed them a sense of both eudaimonic and hedonic pleasure. The ability to thrive at work was supported by some key contextual features and behavioural resources for this set of individuals. Decision-making discretion and access to information are important features that underpin an individual's thriving at work (Kark & Carmeli, 2009; Nel et al., 2015; Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2005; Spreitzer et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2013) and are natural features of the owner-manager's role. Consistent with the model, the owner-managers had created work environments based on trust and a sense of community, which included positive people adding to the owner-manager's ability thrive in the workplace. However, a distinctive feature for this set of owner-managers was that in the main they did not have supervisor support as proposed in the conceptual model.

The owner-managers demonstrated that they had behavioural resources that supported and re-enforced the dimensions of their thriving at work in line with the conceptual model (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2005). Having psychological capital, (hope, optimism, and self-belief), and the ability to influence the direction of the company added positive meaning to the owner-manager. Their status in the organisation allowed them to craft their roles and engage in learning, adding to their knowledge base and giving a sense of forward momentum that fuels agentic behaviours which facilitates further thriving. Relational resources are an antecedent to thriving (Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2017; Spreitzer et al., 2005) and for the owner-manager were both internal and external to the organisation. The owner-manager is in a position to choose who to interact with and how, purposefully avoiding individuals who they feel de-energise them as this lowers their level of energy and hence their thriving. External peer support from other owner-managers was a key resource for these owner-managers and an arena in which they felt they could be

genuine, an important aspect for educators and policy-makers to recognise as cohorts of like-minded individuals are required as a support mechanism to facilitate thriving.

5.1.3 *Objective: To enquire how owner-managers encourage thriving within their growing organisations.*

The owner-manager recognised that their own energy levels were important not just for them but also those around them. They took their role seriously and in line with existing research (Spreitzer et al., 2012; Weigl et al., 2010), recognised that their energy and attitude could be contagious to others, leading them to act in accord with their perception of that role even if this was not always authentic. Supporting extant research (Asplund & Blacksmith, 2011; Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Onorato & Zhu, 2014) the owner-managers in their dialogue gave illustrations on how they were conscious that they sent social signals to employees through their words and deeds. They undertook daily communications with staff for information exchange and to ensure the employee felt valued, often adapting their preferred style to suit the different groups of their employees.

For the long-term sustainability of the business and to support the thriving of the workforce, including themselves, the owner-managers strived to build a sense of community in their organisations. These communities were based on trust, recognising the social embeddedness of work for an individual's thriving was important, (Spreitzer et al., 2005). The owner-managers discussed trying to create positive working environments in which their staff could develop, and through information sharing the employees would appreciate the vision for the organisation and align their values with those of the organisation, which had been pre-determined by the owner-manager. The owner-managers recognised that to grow their company they have to delegate more decision-making by building a management team of like-minded individuals in order to maintain the culture of the organisation (Cullen et al., 2015; Schabram & Maitlis, 2017). The owner-managers discussed moving away from accidental managers to ones where the individual demonstrates a desire for growth and a commitment to the same values as the owner-manager.

5.1.4 *Objective: To develop an understanding of any features of the owner-manager's experience of thriving that are distinctive for them and adapt the Thriving at Work model to reflect the contribution made by this research and thus give insights into how to support these individuals.*

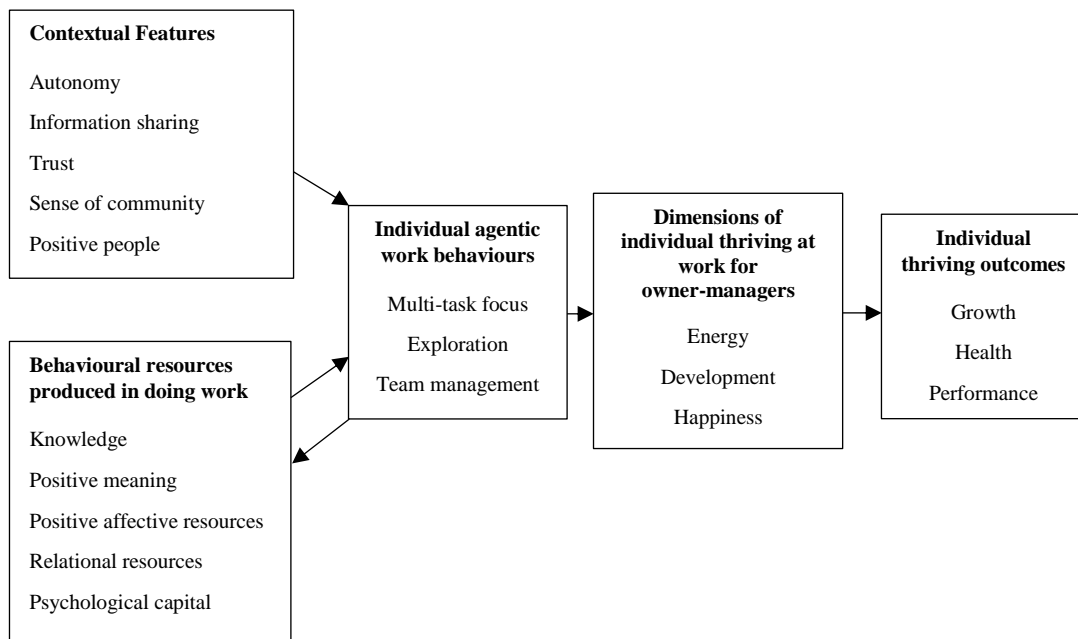
When discussing their experience of thriving at work the owner-managers gave some surprising insights with regard to the extent of the intertwinedness of their private and work life, thereby extending the extant literature in this area. Whilst at one level this intertwinedness would be expected, the discussion highlighted the extent of the interconnectedness, along with the happy acceptance of this. Unlike employees who may undertake activities in their private life as respite from their employment or to restore their energy expended at work (Fritz et al., 2011; Hahn et al., 2012; Sonnentag & Niessen, 2008; Steckler & Waddock, 2018), the owner-managers discussed how they used their spare time to work on their business, never 'switching-off' from their work, and this added to their thriving by allowing them to develop through research and learning, and gave them further energy when they were able to put their ideas into action (Niessen et al., 2012).

A further insight was the degree to which owner-managers relished a challenge and how this added to their experience of thriving at work. Their positive attitude was supported by a strong sense of self-determination and self-belief, under-pinned by a need to have a sense of self-development, allowing them to see a challenge, especially strategic ones, as something progressive and constructive, rather than a hindrance, whereas Prem et al., (2017) found for employees increased learning could act as a hindrance that impeded vitality. For owner-managers the motivation to overcome challenges led to a discussion which highlighted their attitude to change and their preferred speed of change not previously recognised in extant literature on thriving at work.

This study had an even gender split amongst the owner-managers who were interviewed. Anecdotally, the discussions showed that the male owner-managers had a preference for a quicker speed of implementing changes in their businesses than the female owner-managers. This was an unexpected outcome of this study, but a significant one, which warrants further research to enable more personalised

business advice to owner managers, expanding educators' understanding to ensure that owner managers connect fully with their learning. Taking a slower pace to change could aid a female owner-managers' thriving as they have a longer period of time in which to undertake their learning, implement their subsequent knowledge, and thus enhance their self-confidence.

The discussions with the owner-managers on how they experience thriving at work has added to the construct by considering the theoretical model in a new context, that of owner-managers of scale-up companies in the UK. By utilising IPA as a methodology this research has highlighted some distinctive aspects of how owner-managers experience thriving at work, emphasising areas that align and support the model. Given the realities of the taxonomy discussed above and the distinctions of the contextual features for owner-managers the conceptual T@W model as proposed by Spreitzer et al. (2005) can be adapted as follows for this set of individuals:



The insights gained on their experience of thriving at work from this set of individuals has challenged the model to varying degrees, and also given rise to some new, interesting, and surprising elements about how some individuals, owner-managers, thrive at work.

5.2 High-level recommendations and practical implications of this research

These high-level recommendations have practical implications for all stakeholders of the scale-up eco-system. Learning from this study can be disseminated to target audiences in both academia and practice who have an interest in owner-managers of high growth companies, including researchers, educationalists, other owner-managers, and policymakers. It is important for all stakeholders to use the taxonomy of the owner-manager when they are engaging with, or discussing, the owner-manager.

There are three dimensions of thriving for owner-managers, energy, development and daily happiness. As such, energy management becomes a vital resource and technique for owner-managers to recognise. It is recommended that owner-managers put in place processes that will support their energy renewal to fuel further thriving. This energy renewal can be assisted by the owner-managers undertaking further self-development and learning. The implementation of their learning adding feelings of advancement and releasing further energy from accomplishment. The central role of owner-managers in their organisations can add to their stress so they need to craft these roles to give them feelings of happiness on a daily basis, thus, it is also recommended that owner-manager make their organisation a place to live not just exist. This place to 'live' can be extended for their employees by the owner-manager creating a sense of community based on trust which contributes to the thriving of the employees, which in-turn adds to the level of thriving of the owner-manager as they become surrounded by positive, like-minded, individuals. Going forward the learning from this study will be publicised in academic journals that focus on small business and entrepreneurship to enlighten that community with regard to the findings and the recommendations. The benefit is twofold, firstly to inform future research in this area to support the development of new knowledge, and secondly, to challenge existing pedagogy as applied to programs with a focus on owner-managers.

On a practical level, educators need to help owner-managers spot and respond to challenges as this helps the owner-manager gain a sense of development in themselves and their business which subsequently creates a positive energy release.

Hence, educators need to recognise that owner-managers are paratelic learners as this gives them both hedonic and eudaimonic pleasure but will implement change at their own pace. Owner-managers can be further supported by the recognition of the intertwinedness of work and home for them and the importance of energy management as this will have a positive spill-over between both contexts. The owner-managers in this study discussed the significance of external networks which makes it incumbent on interested parties to invest in cohort groups and peer groups to give these individuals support as they grow their business, facilitating safe places for owner-managers to be authentic in, to enhance their thriving.

The researcher through her own practice will share the insights given by the owner-managers in this study and the themes drawn from those insights with policy makers of the eco-system for scale-up companies. These practical ways of disseminating the findings should allow the voice of this set of owner-managers to be heard and give a wider understanding of how these owner-managers of high growth companies thrive at work.

5.3 Limitations of this study

This study has simultaneous strengths and limitations. It is acknowledged that the owner-managers of scale-up companies are unique and are a small but important part of the overall UK economy. A limitation may therefore be that the findings are based on a small number of pre-determined atypical individuals that were thriving at work. For some this particular limitation might suggest that the findings have to be interpreted cautiously. However, the underpinning research methodology provides a robust rationale for such numbers as the aim of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of how owner-managers experience thriving at work, which are idiographic understandings of those who are experiencing this phenomenon. The research method in the study used a purposive, homogeneous sample. The owner-managers covered a cross section of industry classifications and had an even split between genders, male and female. The underpinning methodology provides a robust rationale for such numbers and also a justification for what are idiographic understandings. The sample size is adequate for a study using IPA and is in line with

eminent research in this field, that of Cope (2005) and Smith et al. (2009), with the sampling methods accepted and supported.

The owner-managers brought a perspective unique to them and the findings may have a different outcome with a different sample. The study was not specifically designed to evaluate, quantify or be representative, but to establish defensible propositions that may have a wider significance in different contexts and may be validated or challenged in the future in varied circumstances. In the future, a study within specific categories may give rise to more nuanced results and allow for more specificity. The methodological approach is important in this study. The data has been analysed in depth, and findings have arisen through the use of double hermeneutics, by making sense of the owner-managers making sense, and thus recognising it as an experiential exercise with idiographic depth from which broader conclusions are not the primary objective. Given the myriad influences on an owner-manager a level of caution and thought was used in determining the codes used in the analysis and the subsequent theming. These were generally driven from the taxonomy used by the owner-managers themselves.

5.3.1 Self-reflections of the researcher

A further factor that is simultaneously a limitation and a strength of this research is that of the author and her professional experience, a mentor to small businesses who had once been in business, albeit not currently. This experience meant that whilst being able to readily empathise with the owner-managers, there has been a need to side-line this prior experience in order to question and successfully enact both the double hermeneutic and the phenomenological reduction. This has been aided by the completion of a reflective diary which has aided both the analysis stage of the research and the writing up of the data. It has allowed real-time thoughts to be recorded and gave the researcher a mechanism to bracket off previous understanding, adding to the quality and validity of the research. What follows now is a discussion of reflection and reflexivity as it has been achieved in this research study.

As this research has been underpinned with a phenomenological inquiry, what follows is a commentary in the first-person discussing lessons learned, reflecting on the use of IPA and what may have been done differently. I have ensured that I have reflected upon and scrutinised my role in the shaping of the data collection and subsequent analysis. This is important in order to limit and mitigate any potential biases within the research from the researcher's own subjective experiences and personal values. The literature review at the start of a study is a crucial element of any piece of research and one I found enjoyable. It gave me the opportunity to build my knowledge and identify the gap this research seeks to fill. During the searching for, and reviewing the existing literature, I was able to develop my understanding of positive psychology, in particular the construct of thriving at work, and added to my knowledge of small businesses. Given the breadth of topics which positive psychology encompasses, and potentially could have been included in this review, it took some time to develop a framework where the literature would focus on thriving at work and be relevant for this study. The process however allowed me to develop my critical analysis skills further, improving me as a researcher.

I have learned that undertaking research is an all-encompassing, which may be a consequence of the methodological approach used since it required in-depth engagement, or from the emotional investment that applies to all research. However, I am satisfied with the particular methodology and feel it was apt for the given the aim and objectives of the study and has resulted in uncovering some thought-provoking and unique findings with regard to owner-managers that would not have been unearthed by using more positivist research techniques. The methodology has given me an insight into the theoretical debates surrounding knowledge creation and allowed me to demonstrate understanding of the double hermeneutic, by becoming immersed in the owner-managers' meaning of thriving at work and in turn to make meaning of this. This lengthy process required a high level of personal commitment and time in order to give justice to the methodology and required me to rise to the necessary challenge of putting to one side any previous knowledge, expectation, or understanding.

Within the data collection phase, as the interviewer, I sought to develop a rapport with the owner-managers but as I wanted to understand what thriving at work meant

for them, I had minimal dialogue with the owner-manager during the interview, preferring to listen to their experiences of thriving at work. I personally found this one-sided interview initially quite challenging as I was keen on developing some of their thoughts by asking more questions and engaging them in conversations not appropriate for this type of phenomenological interview. Allowing owner-managers to find meaning through their interviews also meant an adaptation of otherwise practiced interviews skills. I have learnt that the function of an interview as I would conduct it in my previous professional world differs from that of the function of an interview for research purposes. All of the owner-managers were comfortable with the interview process and enjoyed talking about their business. However, some would wander in their dialogue, moving from talking about thriving at work for them to what thriving looked like for their business, or did not understand what the terminology was referring too. I had to adjust my interview style to suit the interview and be on guard to allow the owner-manager's experiences to be revealed through the dialogue and not my interpretation or definition. I feel asking owner-managers to discuss their experience became a reflective tool for them, and for me, and the use of pilot interviews allowed me to develop my technique.

The interpretation phase was complex, but the approach to analysis proposed by Smith et al. (2009) was an important framework for an inexperienced qualitative researcher such as me. During the analysis stage I transcribed the transcripts myself to gain an initial interpretation of what was said by the owner-managers, and then had to listen to them many times to ensure that I could move beyond the subjective understanding of the text and first level description, shifting from empathy to questioning, to demonstrate an appreciation of the double hermeneutic in IPA, making sense of the owner-managers' attempt to make sense of their own experience of thriving at work. I found this process difficult as initially, and perhaps inevitably, the interpretations reflected some aspect of my own thinking and what I expected to find from my knowledge of the existing literature in the area of thriving at work. However, re-reading and cross-checking across the different transcripts gave me the ability to develop themes through an iterative process that can be substantiated from the text.

I coded the transcripts with the taxonomy used by the owner-managers when they described thriving for them and how they experienced thriving at work. Through the coding I captured evidence and in turn commented on these codes by linking them in memos. Initially the number of first order codes was overwhelming in number, but as the interviews progressed, they were able to be grouped which made the process more manageable and in doing so, it became clear to me that there were emerging themes across the transcripts. Having developed the initial themes, I had to take an enforced break from my research due to work commitments. Returning to the data was challenging as I had to reconnect with the findings and my thoughts surrounding them, but on reflection I think this was useful as I came to the data with an unclouded mind and a renewed vigour. This helped me uncover more subtle themes that were not initially evident when I was immersed in the data collection and analysis.

According to IPA, adopting a phenomenological stance is vital. To ensure transparency, on a number of occasions I refreshed my knowledge of the existing empirical studies around the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005). I felt this was important to ensure that the ideas were explicit and seen as a priori embedded in my data. At one point this was particularly pertinent and difficult as the evidence from my data around the agentic behaviours was appearing to challenge the T@W model (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Thus, I went back to the original 1993 study that underpinned the T@W model itself to ensure that my interpretation and analysis was correct prior to drawing any conclusions. The actual writing up of this study combined some steep learning curves, moments of elation that comes with understanding, and periods of despair and frustration, when life impeded my research, or understanding was challenging. The final part of the study required having the confidence to express what I have found in the data which was time-taking, requiring me to be reflective and reflexive, especially where it did not align to prevailing research, but it is hoped I have achieved this in full and will be able to move forward to develop this area further post my viva.

As an existing academic, undertaking this Doctorate in Professional Studies will inform my future practice twofold. Firstly, with regard to my students in the future it will increase my empathy towards them and will help to facilitate their learning to a

greater extent. Not only in the content, but also the process of carrying out effective research. Highlighting the emotional rollercoaster ride that they are undertaking and the benefit of applying the constructive feedback they receive, as this can lead to an increased satisfaction with their final output. In addition, the research aspect of my role has been enhanced tremendously by carrying out this qualification. It gives me a passion for undertaking further studies in this area to inform a developing eco-system in the UK by providing informed and thought-provoking research in the future. The research has highlighted a number of exciting opportunities to pursue going forward in an unexplored field in the UK. As well as an academic I am a mentor to the owners of very small businesses. This study will allow me to relay research informed advice to those owners to help them thrive as they grow their business. Challenging them to think of their own strengths and aspects of their work that supports their thriving. Having now spoken to a number of owner-managers my suggestions will include anonymous practical illustrations to help these business owners. It is hoped that these actions will give the business owners further self-efficacy and the energy to continue to grow their business to become a scale-up.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

Given that there are an estimated 36,510 scale-up companies in the UK (Scale-up Insights, 2019), the scope of thriving at work construct makes the potential for further research vast and at the same time an exciting opportunity. Following the contributions made by this study further research could develop in a number of areas, but for the purposes of this study the recommendations have been categorised under three broad headings that relate to owner-managers in the UK who were thriving at work. Firstly, being an extension of the existing research to give a deeper understanding of some of the facets highlighted by the owner-managers on their experience of thriving at work; secondly, given that the T@W model is a gauge on thriving, longitudinal research could be undertaken to highlight how this occurs in practice; and finally, more comparative analysis both between owner-managers themselves and their associates in the workplace and at home. These broad headings are expanded upon below:

5.4.1 *Extension of existing research*

Whilst there was some homogeneity in the sample chosen as all of the owner-managers had been on an educational programme and their businesses complied with the OECD definition of scale-up companies, there were distinctions amongst them in terms of size and industry category. Exploration of those differences could result in rich and useful information. Natural extensions could include deeper or more specific explorations of conditions or characteristics presented in this study. Other natural extensions would be comparisons across genders or within specific industries as highlighted above. These comparisons may yield different conclusions or highlight the prevalence of different features across different categories. The exploration of more specific populations would be beneficial to enhance the generalisability of the themes presented herein.

5.4.2 *Longitudinal research*

The research conducted was a point in time when owner-managers were found to be thriving at work using the Porath et al. (2011) measures. Whilst the basis of the research was appreciative inquiry to determine what was working well, factors that prevent thriving at work for owner-managers could be explored more deeply, which will inform the overall thriving at work construct for this set of individuals. With regret, this research did not address specifically whether thriving was momentary or sustained, however, the owner-managers did discuss the mechanisms used when they had low levels of energy and what they did away from the workplace to maintain their learning and development. As both energy and learning are the two main dimensions of the model these actions can be interpreted as the owner-managers unconsciously using the model as a gauge for their thriving, and thriving being a sustainable phenomenon for them in their lives.

A longitudinal study may test how owner-managers use the thriving at work's two dimensions as a gauge that then impacts their thriving. Greater clarity around this would be interesting and useful for other owner-managers as they would be informed by the research from like-minded individuals. In addition, longitudinal studies may inform the thriving at work construct for owner-managers at different stages of their growth cycle. Following how an owner-manager self-adapts by directing their own goals and related strategies over time, across new, dynamic, or adverse contexts as

their business grows, could give an understanding to what cues prompt a change in their level of thriving.

5.4.3 Comparative

The research did not have a comparative component so it would be interesting to compare elements of thriving at work between the owner managers in this research who were thriving and those who are identified as not thriving when measured using the Porath et al., (2012) scale. This would allow consideration to be given to the barriers to thriving at work that may be in existence for these individuals. In addition, a comparative study could be undertaken between owner-managers and their employees. Research could consider the alignment of thought with regard to the different contextual features of the model and the initiatives the owner-managers feel they have put in place for their employees to create a sense of community to support their thriving, and whether these are recognised by employees as features that support their thriving at work. Given the intergenerational differences that may impact a modern business these comparative studies could be extended to see features that are similar or differential that impact an individual as they age.

The owner-managers demonstrated how they had strong work-life and home-life integration with both aspects readily intertwined. Given this intertwinedness, thriving at work could be examined across both contexts, with thriving having implications not only for the owner-manager but also their partners in their home-life. Consideration could be given to how this is different for employees who arguably have a greater separation between these contexts. This would extend the research around thriving at work and also that around work-life integration.

5.5 Conclusion

The researcher was motivated to gain a deep understanding of how owner managers thrive at work, so the aim of this research was to examine and develop that understanding in order to add to extant research and give practical recommendations for other stakeholders who have an interest in this area. The research has addressed this aim in that it has provided valuable insights leading to an adaptation of Spreitzer et al.'s (2005) T@W model and has highlighted some exciting opportunities for

additional research to add to the knowledge about this complex but exciting phenomenon.

The research has also added to the professional practice of the researcher and has offered some practical areas which could be advanced, to lead to constructive support for, and understanding of, this set of individuals as the eco-system for scale-up businesses develops in the UK. Talking to owner-managers in language relevant to them, providing opportunities for them to develop and learn, in an environment in which they can be authentic, will support the owner-manger's thriving at work.

(Word count 50,630)

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Appendices

Appendix One: Analysis of articles in the literature review

Table One: Analysis of article by subject area in the Association of Business Schools Academic Journal Guide 2015

Subject Area	Number of Articles Reviewed	Number of Articles Used
Psychology (Organisational)	43	32
General Management, Business Ethics and Social Responsibility	38	23
Organisation Studies	23	8
Human Resource Management and Employment Studies	15	5
Psychology (General)	8	1
Management Development and Education	4	2
Operations Research and Management Science	1	1
Entrepreneurship; Small Business Management	2	2
Innovation	2	
Strategy	1	
International Business and Area Studies	2	1
Other Sector Studies	3	
Total of Articles listed in ABS Academic Journal Guide	142	74
Articles not listed in the ABS Academic Journal Guide	69	7
Overall Total	211	82

Table Two: Analysis of articles per journal rating in the in the Association of Business Schools Academic Journal Guide 2015

AJG 2015	Number of Articles Reviewed	Number of Articles Used
4	54	45
3	16	7
2	37	15

1	36	8
Not Ranked	68	7

Table Three: Analysis of articles per year

Year (s)	Number of Articles Reviewed	Number of Articles Used
2018	38	13
2017	29	11
2016	30	5
2011-2016	80	35
2005-2010	34	18
Total	211	82

Table Four: Analysis of articles by research method

Author	Title of the journal article	Year	Literature Type	Geographic region if available	Participants of the study
Abid, G., Zahra, I., & Ahmed, A.	Promoting thriving at work and waning turnover intention. A relational perspective	2016	Quantitative	South Asia	Employees
Ashforth, B. E., Myers, K. K., & Sluss, D. M.	"I identify with her," "I identify with him": unpacking the dynamics of personal identification in organisations.	2016	Literature review/ conceptual model		
Atwater, L., & Carmeli, A.	Leader-member exchange, feelings of energy, and involvement in creative work	2009	Quantitative	Israel	Employees
Baruch, Y., Grimland, S., & Vigoda-Gado, E.	Professional vitality and career success: Mediation, age and outcomes.	2014	Quantitative	Israel	Employees
Bildstein, I., Gueldenberg, S., & Tjitra, H.	Effective leadership of knowledge workers: results of an intercultural business study.	2013	Qualitative	Far East	Employees
Bono, J. E., Glomb, T. M., Shen, W., Kim,	Building positive resources: Effects of positive events and	2013	Quantitative	USA	Employees

E., & Koch, A. J.	positive reflection on work stress and health.				
Boyd, N. M.	Introducing thriving at work to the field of community psychology.	2015	Literature review/ conceptual model		
Brown, D., Arnold, R., Fletcher, D., Standage, M.	Human Thriving: A conceptual debate and literature review.	2017	Literature review		
Butterfield, L. D., Borgen, W. A., Amundson, N. E., & Erlebach, A. C.	What helps and hinders workers in managing change.	2010	Qualitative	Canada *	Employees
Carmeli, A., Brueller, D., & Dutton, J. E.	Learning behaviours in the workplace: The role of high-quality interpersonal relationships and psychological safety.	2009	Quantitative	unknown	Employees/ PG students
Carmeli, A., & Russo, M.,	The power of micro-moves in cultivating regardful relationships: Implications for work-home enrichment and thriving.	2016	Literature review/ conceptual model		
Carmeli, A., & Spreitzer, G. M.	Trust, connectivity, and thriving: Implications for innovative behaviors at work.	2009	Quantitative	Israel	Employees
Cole, M. S., Bruch, H., & Vogel, B.	Energy at work: A measurement validation and linkage to unit effectiveness.	2012	Quantitative	Various	Employees
Cullen, K. L., Gerbasi, A., & Chrobot-Mason, D.	Thriving in central network positions: The role of political skill.	2015	Quantitative	unknown	Employees
Donaldson, S. I., & Ko, I.	Positive organizational psychology, behavior, and scholarship: A review of the emerging literature and evidence base.	2010	Literature review		
Dutton, J. E., Roberts, L. M., & Bednar, J.	Pathways for positive identity construction at work: Four types of	2010	Literature review		

	positive identity and the building of social resources.				
Farh, C. I. C., Lanaj, K., & Ilies, R. (2017).	Resource-based contingencies of when team-member exchange helps member performance in teams.	2017	Quantitative	USA	Employees
Fisher, C. D.	Happiness at work	2010	Literature review		
Frazier, M. L. & Tupper, C.	Supervisor prosocial motivation, employee thriving, and helping behavior: A trickle-down model of psychological safety.	2018	Quantitative	USA	Employees
Fritz, C., Lam, C. F., & Spreitzer, G. M.	It's the Little Things That Matter: An Examination of Knowledge Workers' Energy Management.	2011	Quantitative	USA	Employees
Galinsky, E., Matos, K., & Sakai-O'Neill, K.	Workplace flexibility: a model for change.	2013	Quantitative	USA	Employees
Gerbasi, A., Porath, C. L., Parker, A., Spreitzer, G., & Cross, R.	Destructive de-energizing relationships: How thriving buffers their effect on performance.	2015	Quantitative	USA	Employees
Hahn, V. C., Binnewies, C., & Haun, S.	The role of partners for employees' recovery during the weekend.	2012	Quantitative	Germany	Employees
Hahn, V.C., Frese, M., Binnewies, C., & Schmitt, A.	Happy and proactive? The role of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in business owners' personal initiative.	2012	Quantitative	Germany	Employees
Henisz, W.J.	Leveraging the financial crisis to fulfil the promise of progressive management.	2011	Literature review		
Hildenbrand, K., Sacramento, C.A., & Binnewies, C.	Transformational leadership and burnout: The role of thriving and followers' openness to experience.	2018	Quantitative	Germany	Employees

Inceoglu, I., Thomas, G., Chu, C., Plans, D., & Gerbasi, A.	Leadership behavior and employee well-being. An integrated review and a future research agenda.	2018	Literature review		
Jiang, Z.	Proactive personality and career adaptability: The role of thriving at work.	2017	Quantitative	China	Employees
Kabat-Farr, D., & Cortina, L. M.	Receipt of interpersonal citizenship: fostering agentic emotion, cognition, and action in organizations.	2017	Quantitative	USA	Employees
Kark, R., & Carmeli, A.	Alive and creating: the mediating role of vitality and aliveness in the relationship between psychological safety and creative work involvement.	2009	Quantitative	Israel	Employees/ PG students
Kira, M., & Balkin, D. B.	Interactions between work and identities: Thriving, withering, or redefining the self?	2014	Literature review/ conceptual model		
Kira, M., & van Eijnatten, F. M.	Socially sustainable work organizations: A chaordic systems approach.	2008	Literature review		
Korunka, C., Kubicek, B., Paškvan, M., & Ulferts, H.	Changes in work intensification and intensified learning: challenge or hindrance demands?	2015	Quantitative	Austria	Employees
McDonald, M. L., & Westphal, J. D.	My brother's keeper? CEO identification with the corporate elite, social support among CEOs, and leader effectiveness.	2011	Quantitative	USA	Employees
Madden, L., Mathias, B. D., & Madden, T. M.	In good company: The impact of perceived organizational support and positive relationships at work on turnover intentions.	2015	Quantitative	USA	Employees
Marchiondo, L.A., Cortina, L.M., & Kabat-Farr, D.	Attributions and appraisals of workplace incivility: Finding light on the dark side?	2018	Quantitative	USA	Employees

Meyer, M.	Positive business: doing good and doing well.	2015	Literature review		
Mortier, A. V., Vlerick, P., & Clays, E.	Authentic leadership and thriving among nurses: the mediating role of empathy.	2016	Quantitative	Belgium*	Employees
Mossholder, K. W., Richardson, H. A., Settoon R. P.	Human resource systems and helping in organisations. A relational perspective.	2011	Literature review		
Mzid, I., Khachlouf, N., & Soparnot, R.	How does family capital influence the resilience of family firms?	2018	Qualitative	Tunisia	Employees
Nel, T., Stander, M. W., & Latif, J.	Investigating positive leadership, psychological empowerment, work engagement and satisfaction with life in a chemical industry.	2015	Quantitative	South Africa	Employees
Niessen, C., Mäder, I., Stride, C., & Jimmieson, N. L.	Thriving when exhausted: The role of perceived transformational leadership.	2017	Quantitative	Germany	Teachers
Niessen, C., Sonnentag, S., & Sach, F.	Thriving at work—A diary study.	2012	Quantitative	Germany*	Employees
Nilsson, W.		2015	Literature review		
Onorato, M., & Zhu, J.	An empirical study on the relationships between authentic leadership and organizational trust by industry segment.	2014	Quantitative	USA	Employees
Paterson, T. A., Luthans, F., & Jeung, W.	Thriving at work: Impact of psychological capital and supervisor support.	2014	Quantitative	USA	Employees
Plouffe, C. R. & Gregoire, Y.	Intraorganizational employee navigation and socially derived outcomes: Conceptualization, validation, an effects on overall performance.	2011	Quantitative	USA	Employees

Porath, C., Spreitzer, G., Gibson, C., & Garnett, F. G.	Thriving at work: Toward its measurement, construct validation, and theoretical refinement	2012	Quantitative	USA	Employees
Porath, C. L., & Pearson, C. M.	The Cost of Bad Behavior.	2010	Literature review/ descriptive		
Prem, R., Ohly, S., Kubicek, B., & Korunka, C.	Thriving on challenge stressors? Exploring time pressure and learning demands as antecedents of thriving at work: Thriving on Challenge Stressors.	2017	Quantitative	unknown	Employees
Ren, H., Yunlu, D.G., Shaffer, M. & Fodchuk, K.M.	Expatriate success and thriving: The influence of job deprivation and emotional stability.	2014	Quantitative	USA	Teachers
Riaz, S., Xu, Y. & Hussain, S.	Understanding employee innovative behavior and thriving at work: A Chinese perspective	2018	Quantitative	China	Employees
Roberts, L. M.	Shifting the lens on organizational life. The added value of positive scholarship.	2006	Literature review/ descriptive		
Roberts, L. M., Dutton, J. E., Spreitzer, G. M., Heaphy, E. D., & Quinn, R. E.	Composing the reflected best-self-portrait: Building pathways for becoming extraordinary in work organizations.	2005	Literature review/ conceptual model		
Rogers, K.M., & Corley, K.G.	Seeing more than orange: Organizational respect and positive identity transformation in a prison context.	2017	Qualitative	USA	Employees/ inmates
Rozkwitalska, M.	Thriving in mono- and multicultural organizational contexts	2018	Quantitative	Unknown	Employees
Russo, M., Buonocore, F., Carmeli, A., & Guo, L.	When family supportive supervisors meet employees' need for caring: Implications for work-family enrichment and thriving.	2018	Quantitative	China & Italy	Employees
Salerno, A.	Consumer creative experience: The role of	2009	Qualitative	France	Crafters

	motivational orientation in creative leisure activity.				
Schabram, K., & Maitlis, S. (Negotiating the challenges of a calling: Emotion and enacted sensemaking in animal shelter work.	2017	Qualitative	USA	Employees
Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Van Rhenen, W.	How changes in job demands and resources predict burnout, work engagement, and sickness absenteeism.	2009	Quantitative	Netherlands	Employees
Schippers, M. C., & Hogenes, R.	Energy Management of People in Organizations: A Review and Research Agenda.	2011	Literature review		
Shefer, N., Carmeli, A., & Cohen-Meitar, R.	Bringing Carl Rogers back in: Exploring the power of positive regard at work.	2017	Quantitative	Various	Employees
Sonenshein, S.	How organizations foster the creative use of resources.	2014	Qualitative	USA	Employees
Sonenshein, S., Dutton, J. E., Grant, A.M., Spreitzer, G.M., & Sutcliffe, K.	Growing at work: Employees' interpretation of self-change in organizations.	2013	Qualitative	USA	Employees
Sonnentag, S., & Niessen, C.	Staying vigorous until work is over: The role of trait vigour, day-specific work experiences and recovery.	2008	Quantitative	Germany	Employees
Spitzmuller, M. & Van Dyne, L.	Proactive and reactive helping: Contrasting the positive consequences of different forms of helping.	2013	Literature review/ conceptual framework		
Spreitzer, G.M.	Leading to grow and growing to lead: Leadership development lessons from positive organizational studies.	2006	Literature review/ descriptive		
Spreitzer, G.M., & Cameron, K.S.	Applying a POS Lens to Bring out the Best in Organizations.	2012	Literature review/ descriptive		

Spreitzer, G.M., & Porath, C. L.	Creating sustainable performance.	2012	Literature review/ descriptive		
Spreitzer, G.M., Porath, C. L., & Gibson, C. B.	Toward human sustainability: How to enable more thriving at work.	2012	Literature review/ descriptive		
Spreitzer, G.M., Porath, C.L., & Gibson, C.B.	Thriving at Work: Why It's Important and How to Enable More of It	2013	Literature review/ descriptive		
Spreitzer, G. M., Stephens, J. P., & Sweetman, D.	The Reflected Best Self field experiment with adolescent leaders: Exploring the psychological resources associated with feedback source and valence.	2009	Quantitative	USA	PG students /leaders
Spreitzer, G.M., Sutcliffe, K., Dutton, J., Sonenshein, S., & Grant, A. M.	A Socially Embedded Model of Thriving at Work.	2005	Literature review/ conceptual model		
Steckler, E.L., & Waddock, S.	Self-sustaining practices of successful social change agents. A retreats framework for supporting transformational change.	2018	Qualitative	USA	Social Entrepreneurs
Thompson, B., & Ravlin, E.	Protective factors and risk factors: Shaping the emergence of dyadic resilience at work.	2017	Literature review/ conceptual framework		
Uy, M. A., Jia Lin, K., & Ilies, R.	Is it better to give or receive? The role of help in buffering the depleting effects of surface acting	2017	Quantitative	Singapore	Employees
Vinarski-Peretz, H., Binyamin, G., & Carmeli, A.	Subjective relational experiences and employee innovative behaviors in the workplace.	2011	Quantitative	Israel	Employees
Wallace, J. C., Butts, M. M., Johnson, P. D., Stevens, F. G., & Smith, M. B.	Multilevel Model of Employee Innovation: Understanding the Effects of Regulatory Focus, Thriving, and	2016	Quantitative	USA	Employees

	Employee Involvement Climate.				
Walumbwa, F. O., Muchiri, M. K., Misati, E., Wu, C., & Meiliani, M.	Inspired to perform: A multilevel investigation of antecedents and consequences of thriving at work.	2017	Quantitative	S.E. Asia	Employees
Weigl, M., Hornung, S., Parker, S. K., Petru, R., Glaser, J., & Angerer, P.	Work engagement accumulation of task, social, personal resources: A three-wave structural equation model.	2010	Quantitative	Germany	Employees
Youssef, C. M., & Luthans, F.	Positive Organizational Behavior in the Workplace: The Impact of Hope, Optimism, and Resilience.	2007	Literature review/ descriptive		
Zhang, Y., Xu, S., Jin J., & Ford, M. T.	The within and cross domain effects of work-family enrichment: A meta-analysis.	2018	Quantitative	USA & Asia	Employees
Zhu, X., Law, S.K., Sun, C., & Yang, D.	Thriving of employees with disabilities: The roles of job self-efficacy, inclusion, and team-learning climate.	2018	Quantitative	China	Employees

Note: employees include managers/leaders in organisations, but are not the owners of the organisation

*assumed location of the research based on the university location of the author. No geographic location identified in the journal article

Appendix Two: Analysis of Interview Participants

Participant Identifier	Gender	Age	Industry Classification of their business	Level of Thriving (as per identification survey)
001	F	45-54	Manufacturing	80%
002	F	55-64	Manufacturing & Retail	92%
003	M	55-64	Digital	88%
004	M	25-34	Design & Manufacturing	88%
005	M	35-44	Media	92%
006	F	55-64	Health	100%
007	M	35-44	Legal	76%
008	F	35-44	IT	94%

Appendix Three: Consent Form and Survey Questions

(Note: An introductory mail was sent to potential participants to accompany this survey, explaining the purpose of the research and is available from the author)

The following questions are related to you at work.

There are no right, or wrong answers so please just relax and enjoy....

1. The purpose of this research project is to explore how owner-managers thrive at work. This is a research project being conducted by Wendy Wild as part of her doctoral study. You are invited to participate in this research project because you are a owner-manager who has recently been on an educational programme designed for growth companies. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You can decide not to participate in this study and can withdraw from participating at any time.

The survey will take approximately **5 minutes** to complete and responses will be anonymised. All data will be stored in a password protected electronic format.

The findings will be included in the researcher's Doctoral thesis and will also be put forward for consideration for publication in relevant journals and books. The results may be shared with the University of Chester representatives.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Wendy Wild, (wendy.wild@manchester.ac.uk) or her supervisor Paul Manning (p.manning@chester.ac.uk). This research has been reviewed according to University of Chester's ethical procedures for research involving human subjects.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

- you have read the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button.

Agree

Disagree

2. I find myself learning often

Never

Always

3. I continue to learn more as time goes by

Never

Always

- | | | |
|--|-------|--------|
| 4. I see myself continually improving | Never | Always |
| 5. I find myself not learning | Never | Always |
| 6. I am developing a lot as a person | Never | Always |
| 7. I feel alive and vital | Never | Always |
| 8. I have energy & spirit | Never | Always |
| 9. I do not feel energetic | Never | Always |
| 10. I feel alert and awake | Never | Always |
| 11. I look forward to each day | Never | Always |
| 12. I agree to be interviewed in the near future as part of this research(45 minute interview) | Yes | |
| | No | |

13. What is your gender?

Female

Male

14. What is your age?

18 to 24

55 to 64

25 to 34

65 to 74

35 to 44

75 or older

45 to 54

15. How long have you been an owner-manager?

16. What industry sector do you operate in?

Appendix Four: Information sheet for the survey

Project Title: Thriving at Work for Owner-managers

Wendy Wild (Doctoral Student): w.wild@manchester.ac.uk

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Wendy Wild as part of her doctoral study. The study aims to explore the role and experiences of owner-managers of growth organisations. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to complete a confidential online survey which should only take five minutes. All responses are voluntary, and you can withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, without explanation or prejudice.

You can then self-select to take part in further research that will explore your perspectives on thriving at work in an informal interview. However, you can complete the survey without any obligation to participate in an interview.

If you are invited to participate further, then the interview will be digitally recorded to ensure we can accurately capture what you share. You'll have an opportunity to review the recording. It is expected that the interview will take 45 minutes to complete. This means if you complete the initial survey, the interview and character survey, the total commitment required of you should not exceed 50 minutes.

What are the expected benefits?

There are no expected benefits to you directly from taking part in the study. However, it is anticipated that your survey and interview responses will enable us to systematically investigate and give insights into how owner-managers thrive at work to enlighten others and add to existing research in this area, thereby benefiting wider communities.

This research has been approved by the University of Chester's ethics committee. Other members of the research team are Prof Paul Manning (Project Supervisor): p.manning@chester.ac.uk and Dr Madeleine Mansfield (Co-Supervisor): m.mansfield@chester.ac.uk

Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information by emailing wendy.wild@manchester.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this.

Standard Information about the Research

Who will conduct the research?

Wendy Wild DProf. Student Chester Business School

Working title of the Research:

A case study of owner-managers of high growth companies thriving at work

What is the aim of the research?

The principal research aim is to explore how owner-managers experience thriving at work from their own perspective. This stage of the research is to measure thriving at work for owner-managers such as yourself. The research is timely with the increased interest in well-being at work and the UK Government's growing interest in scale-up companies following the publication of the Scale-Up Report in 2014. The research aims to provide new insights into the experience of thriving at work for the owner-manager themselves.

Why have I been chosen?

This research aims to explore the experiences of thriving at work for owner-managers of growth companies. These were identified from a listing of those who attended an educational programme designed for growth companies, of which you were one.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

Each owner-manager taking part will be asked to undertake an online survey. The survey is based on existing research on thriving at work. The survey will be piloted beforehand by the researcher.

What happens to the data collected?

Each survey will then be analysed to measure the individual's thriving and will be compared with one another for similarities and differences. The data will provide the basis of the findings of the research and to give a population from which further interview participants can be drawn. For those owner-managers who are not selected, or do not wish to be selected, for an interview will receive an email which will give further information about thriving at work should they want to read it.

How is confidentiality maintained?

The names and contact details of the owner-managers will be stored in the cloud which will only be accessed by the researcher and supervisors. Participants will be coded. All surveys will be stored electronically in the cloud and password protected

Study data and material may be looked at by individuals from the University of Chester, from regulatory authorities, for monitoring and auditing purposes, and this may well include access to personal information.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time up to and during the survey without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

Participants will not receive any payment for participating in the research.

What is the duration of the research?

The survey should take five minutes to complete

Where will the research be conducted?

The research will be conducted online by the owner-manager.

What happens if I disclose an issue which might be perceived as inappropriate conduct?

If during the any stage of the data collection an issue arises which might be perceived as inappropriate conduct, the researcher will alert the owner-manager to this and will then discuss this with the supervisors of the research. If the issue is deemed serious, this will be raised by the researcher's supervision team with the owner-manager. Any data collected at this point will not be included in the study.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

The findings will be included in the researcher's Doctoral thesis and will also be put forward for consideration for publication in relevant journals and books.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions. If they are unable to resolve your concern or you wish to make a complaint regarding the study, please contact a Paul Manning on 01244 51 2568 or by email to p.manning@chester.ac.uk

Appendix Five: Replacement data given on the information sheet for the interview

You are being invited to take part in the interview stage of a research study as part of a Doctoral student's project which aims to explore the role and experiences of owner-managers of growth organisations.

This research has been approved by the University of Chester's ethics committee.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the aim of the research?

The principal research aim is to explore how owner-managers experience thriving at work. The research is timely with the increased interest in well-being at work and the UK Government's growing interest in scale-up companies following the publication of the Scale-Up Report in 2014. The research aims to provide new insights into the experience of thriving at work for the owner-manager themselves and the impact this could have on their organisation, thereby informing them, other owner-managers, policymakers and educators.

Why have I been chosen?

This research aims to explore the experiences of thriving at work for owner-managers of growth companies. These were identified as someone who self-selected for further involvement in the research on the original survey. This part of the research wishes to investigate how your subjective experience of thriving at work is fulfilled, and if this is experienced differently from other owner-managers.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

Each owner-manager taking part in this stage of the research will be asked to undertake a semi-structured interview. The interview will be based on a schedule put together before the interview. The schedule will be piloted beforehand by the researcher. The interview will take place in a work place setting convenient for the participant and should take no more than 45 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. At the end of the interview owner-managers will be offered an opportunity to complete an online character survey to show their main strengths to see if this aligned to current research, (Porath et al. 2012; Jiang, 2017). A copy of the report will be available for the owner-manager.

What happens to the data collected?

The data will be collected by transcribing the audio–recording of the interview. Each transcript will then be analysed for themes and will be compared with one another for similarities and differences. The data will provide the basis of the findings of the research. Following the interview each participant will receive an email which will give further information about thriving at work should they want to read it.

What is the duration of the research?

Participants will be asked to be available for one session lasting no more than 45 minutes. The session will a series of questions based on semi-structured interview schedule and includes time for completion of an online survey.

The interview question topics will be devised by the researcher beforehand and piloted.

Where will the research be conducted?

The research will be conducted in a work place setting of the owner-manager's choosing.

Appendix Six: Consent Form

Thriving at work for owner-managers

Wendy Wild, University of Chester

Email: wendywild123

Request for informed consent:

- I have read the study information sheet provided and been given adequate time to consider it.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that taking part in the study will involve me being interviewed and I agree to this interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that my personal details such as name and organisation address will not be revealed to people outside this project.
- I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, but data collected about me during the study will be anonymised before it is submitted for publication.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the Study at any time and will not be asked any questions about why I no longer want to take part.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the Study my data will not be used.

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Researcher: Wendy Wild Signature:

Date:

Appendix Seven: Interview Prompts – Pilot and Primary Interviews

	Primary Q	Prompts
1.	Can you tell me about yourself and how you became an owner-manager	<p>Your business backgrounds?</p> <p>How long in business?</p> <p>Have you had previous businesses?</p> <p>What are your main duties?</p> <p>How many do you employ?</p>
2.	<p>From your experience how would you define thriving at work?</p> <p>What key words would you use</p> <p>For you, what are your main attributes that help you thrive?</p>	<p>What would be the main characteristics/traits/actions that you feel would demonstrate this?</p>
3.	<p>We are going to look at your survey responses to get a deeper understanding</p> <p>Can you please talk me through your survey responses?</p> <p><i>(OM's will be shown a copy of the survey that they have previously completed)</i></p>	<p>What was your understanding of Q2-6? On learning</p> <p>What does it mean for you? What was your interpretation of these questions?</p> <p>Can you give examples of when you learning the most at work?</p> <p>When you reflect on your learning as your business has grown what are</p>

		<p>take-aways or advice you would give to others?</p> <p><i>Has your attitude changed as your business has grown?</i></p> <p>(added post pilot interview)</p> <p>What was your understanding of Q7-11? On vitality</p> <p>What does it mean for you? What was your interpretation of these questions?</p> <p>Can you give examples of when you experience energy/vitality the most at work?</p> <p>What lessons have you learned with regards your own vitality as your business has grown.</p> <p>When you reflect on your own energy over the years what are the main take-aways or advice you would give to others?</p>
	Has your attitude to learning and energy changed as your organisation has grown?	
4.	What do you think hinders you from thriving more?	<p>Are you able to give examples?</p> <p>How does it make you feel?</p>

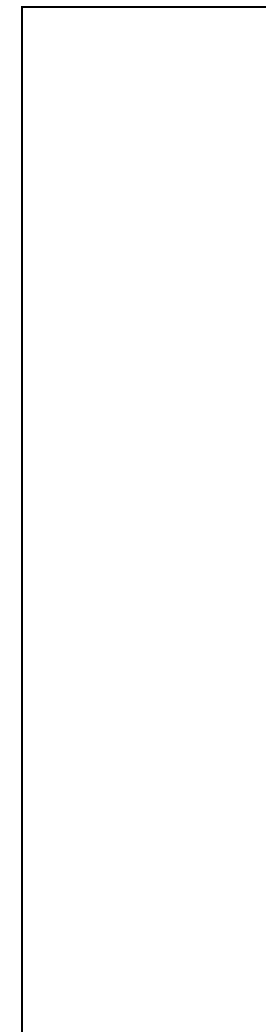
		What do you do about it?
5.	What facilitates your thriving, both inside and outside of work?	<p>Are you able to give examples from within and outside your organisations?</p> <p>Does it spill-over into your life outside of work?</p>
6.	Owner-managers can be quite pivotal in organisations like yours so I would like to understand more about your experiences of thriving and its impact on your organisation	<p>What impact does your thriving have on others in the business?</p> <p>Do you feel that when you are thriving contagious?</p> <p>Can you give illustrations?</p>
7.	Do you consider your organisation as a thriving organisation?	<p>What is your role in building a thriving organisation</p> <p>How do you embed that in your business?</p> <p>How do you ensure you employ the right employees to ensure your organisation thrives?</p> <p>Would you say your employees are thriving?</p> <p>How do you get others enthused?</p> <p>What organisational features does your business have, that enable your employees to thrive?</p>

Appendix Eight: Data Structure

The Aggregate Dimension of the subjective experience of thriving at work for owner-managers in relation to the model supported by Second Order Themes, First Order Codes and First Order Concepts

First Order Concepts	Participant	First Order Codes	Second Order Themes
I think you do have to look after your personal health.	1	Personal health	Energy
obviously if business is thriving, I think it is easier to be energetic	2	Energy/intertwinedness	
I think with my energy and spirit I have got a good aura around me	2	Energy/spirit	
That energy, that keeps me energetic because I can think of an idea and I like it I know I have the capacity to make it happen	2	Energy/spirit/change	
I think if I am enthusiastic and I enjoy what I do, I think that helps with my design teamI think with my energy and spirit I have got a good aura around me so, when things are good, I am probably the best person to be around as I make everybody enthusiastic, but when things are bad, I am not the best person	2	energy/enthusiasm/aura/infectious	
Two (aspects) really define that (thriving) for me and one is energy and the other is change	3	Energy/change	
so long as there is enough new stuff going on and we are doing things differently that gives me a real energy and even if that's not physical it gives me energy, it gives me mental energy and excitement around what we are doing	3	Energy/change/curiosity/creativity	

I don't think you are getting at whether I am fit and well, but about my attitude, some days I am absolutely knackered, but it doesn't mean I don't feel alive and vital	3	Energy/attitude
Building a team, people around me who support that kind of attitude everyone kind of working towards similar goals that gives me energy	3	Positive teams/goal alignment/energy
I thrive on knowing we have a good solid business and we have a really good set of people	3	Good team/energy
Energy and spirit, I think this comes back to the drive.	4	Energy/spirit
When people are making amazing progress independent of me that is just when I feel the most energetic. I want to build an organisation that allows people to thrive really, so I want processes in place where people have autonomy, mastery & purpose	4	Positive teams/ thriving teams/energy
I'd rather stay away than flounder a bit in the office and look a bit demotivated. I'd rather be de-motivated on my own and not influence anyone else.... so, it's the effect of that on other people, just the presence and the energy, and in the work itself if you are not 100% energetic	4	demotivated /influence /effect/energy
Exercising, I feel that is a big help, it lets me just clear my mind as well as help me feel I have a bit more energy or a bit more revitalised	4	Personal health/energy/intertwined
sometimes you are tired, but you are always ready to go again the next day	5	Energy/attitude
Because it is my vision and not someone else's vision it is something I am really interested in, so it gives me a lot of energy and makes me feel energised.	5	Advancement/energy/visionary



Equally if people are negative its contagious as well	5	negative/contagiousness/energy	
Yeah, I think that we set the tone a little bit	5	Tone/ transferable/sense of community/energy	
I will try and make the best out of the worst, so I am full of energy.	6	Energy/attitude	
definitely the way I am is full of energy and I will get up and giving it shot	6	Energy/attitude/spirit	
If people are happy from our services, staff is happy which is the main thing, then that gives me all the energy, I'm happy.	6	Happy teams/energy	
I definitely have an energy and spirit	7	Energy/spirit	
I just want the business to succeed so I get the energy from that	7	Energy/drive	
When you get feedback from the staff to say, that's gone well, I am really happy with that change, so it is the feedback from the teams or the individuals	8	Happy teams/energy	
To thrive as an individual, you have to have a very positive mental attitude.	8	Personal health/energy	
Not having the family support	1	No support	Energy drains
Energy vampires	1	Energy vampires	
Well some people will take up your time and give you the least reward and they take away your energy because they are constantly negative	1	Energy vampires	
I find people who are overly negative a bit draining	5	Energy vampires	

I am at my best when we have a problem, because the guys tend to panic and I tend to say let's just look at the options here, what can we do? and let's just do it.	1	options/discussion/ leadership
I don't think that you cannot learn something new in a day	2	Daily learning
I am in a good place and I am happy with my work and I feel like I am progressing personally, but then the business results are what I want as well, being good	4	Daily learning/happiness/intertwined
I think as you push forward you are constantly pushing into new ground, new territory that you haven't been in before	4	Pushing forward
I am constantly trying to find more information and learn about the different things related to the business	5	Learning
I am constantly switched on, my relaxation is actually, sad as it sounds, is researching and reading and stuff like that.... some best ideas are at home	5	Researching/intertwined
I always see myself as improving, I think I have improved but there is always room, you are always getting better.	6	Self-improvement
thriving is growing, thriving is being busy, thriving is moving up a step	7	Growing/developing
Challenge yourself, I regularly go out of my comfort zone	7	Advancement/development
When I thrive, I feel that I am developing, I feel that I am learning, I feel that I'm not stagnating	8	Developing/learning
I do see myself as a continual learner, I have basically said that day I stop learning is the day I die	8	Learning continually

Self-development

If you like what you do is that really big key and you want it to work	1	Happiness	Happiness in what you are doing
getting up in the morning and looking forward to the day, being happy in what you do otherwise the stress would be too much	2	Daily happiness	
In very simple terms, being excited about coming in the next day	3	Daily excitement	
probably two things, high performance mixed with actually being happy.... I feel you can perform really well and get good results, but it would be a massive stress if it wasn't enjoyable	4	Happiness/high performance/intertwined	
I am in a good place and I am happy with my work and I feel like I am progressing personally,	4	Happiness/development	
I love a day when I am buzzing	8	Happiness/buzzing	
I think the opportunity to learn is high and if you grasp that you can learn all the time	4	Learning continually	Continuous Learning
a thirst for information I am constantly reading up on stuff related to the business....	5	Learning continually	
I think it is important to keep learning and keep developing to be able to keep the company moving forward and keep growing to keep developing as a person anyway	5	Learning continually/self-development	
we are learning continuously.... In business I think I am learning from my junior staff.....I am learning from everyday problems.	6	Learning continually	

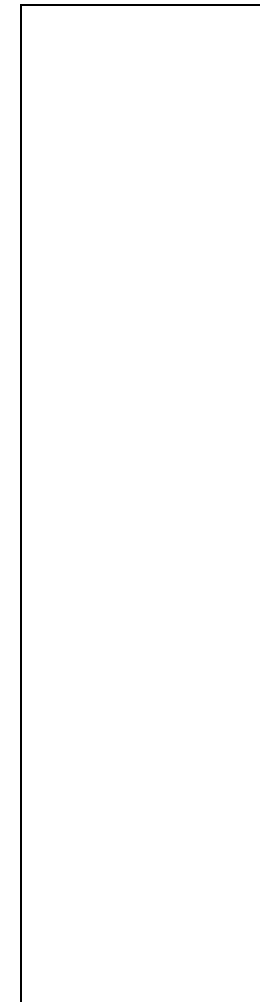
I find myself learning often. I am a sponge, I am constantly trying to learn, I don't have this ego that thinks I know it all already	7	Learning continually/self-development	
When I am out of the office, certain courses weren't the greatest, but I learnt more from just mingling with other businesses, irrelevant what they do, yes, definitely out of the office	7	peer learning	
it's creating that buzz and that's what I want to do within the organisation really, everyone buzzing that they have learnt something.	8	learning continually/organisational feature	
I was literally doing everything	1	Juggling tasks	Multi-tasking
There are always problems, but I don't like it or feel that energetic when there are fifty things to fix", as we grow "there is more cognitive power needed all of the time now	4	Juggling tasks/overload/focus	
We don't have a massive management structure, so we are quite ground level, so everyone sort of comes to us for guidance about their jobs, I get dragged into challenging stuff at an operational level.....so I spend my spare time doing research	5	Overload/operational/development/hindrance	
I must admit that I am in a phase now that I am struggling a little bit to juggle all the balls that I used to juggle quite well, because I have extra staff which bring on extra problems in a way, nice stuff as well,	7	Juggling tasks	
starting with what seems like an insurmountable problem and finding a solution to that through learning	3	Exploration/challenge/learning	Exploration

I have always been interested in change and the lifeblood of the business since I set it up is always about doing things differently from the way other people do it and new things.....It was difficult at first, but it fairly quickly became another creative challenge for me and is what drives me, is creative challenges	3	Exploration/creativity/challenge	
I have an unhealthy obsession for work and improving and looking at new information	5	Exploration	
it didn't feel like a massive challenge, it was exciting and interesting, but it all came from a tiny little bit of wonder about how did XYZ become so successful?"	5	challenge/attitude	
When I get some challenge, I will go for it really you know things like these will give me a bit of a buzz rather than getting me down, I say ok, I am going to try	6	challenge/attitude	
I try to avoid them and to avoid them I get rid of them, so if they are too negative and I am having to spend too much of my time with them I just get rid of them.....I say "if I have to stand over you you are no good to me"	1	I want/dislike negative/hindrance	Self
I want to be around people with energy..... I want people around me to take it if I have something positive to give.....I definitely cannot be around people who don't have an ambition or have got no energy... I just can't be around them	6	I want/dislike negative/hindrance	
It frustrates me, and hence why we have made some changes, as every manager hasn't been strong enough to challenge their staff... that's what I want	8	I want/dislike no ambition	

The Aggregate Dimension of the features of a growing organisation led by an owner-manager who is thriving supported by Second Order Themes, First Order Codes and First Order Concepts

First Order Concepts	Participant	First Order Codes	Second Order Themes
I don't like it if there are any grumblings going on between staff	2	Staff issues/ operational/sense of community/hindrane	Sense of Community
I do have a lot of one to one interaction on a daily basis to talk about projects and guide people, and a lot of the time we go off on tangent to see how they fit in at work	5	daily/interaction/ communication/sense of community	
Because I try new things, be happy, everybody should be enjoying coming to work, working as team.	6	innovative/happy/ teamwork/sense of community	
We have a five-minute huddle, so that kind of gives me energy in a way and it helps me get better that I have conveyed my message and we have started the day on a positive note for the team	6	daily/communication/positive/ sense of community	
I think the team feels a bit energetic if I talk to them.	6	energetic/communication/tran smittable	
I think all this interactive stuff does help the staff as well to grow.....you have to train them, you have to talk to them, and get them through the training by talking to them about what we want, what our values are, and it is continuous thing.....it is almost every day or week	6	daily/communication/positive/ sense of community/development	

If I am not right, or if I am not feeling good or looking good the staff pick up on it definitely.	6	tone/ transferable/energy
Just talk to them, mainly talk to them and I ask them a lot about their input so they will suggest things	6	two-way communication
laziness, people, lazy people around me or if I don't get the right answers.	6	staff issues/ operational/self
You know, people that won't take advice or won't work as a team that demotivates me a lot. It really does.	6	staff issues/operational
I think sometimes when the pressure is on, I can close off and people realise that something is odd shall we say?	7	pressure/closed/noticeable/energy
Vitality, just generating a buzz in the office so everyone feels part of it.	7	vitality/buzz/inclusive
I say if we have company vision for our customers, we have to do it, we have to live and breathe that ourselves,	8	goal alignment/values/sense of community
I spend half a day a week walking round the office and chatting to people,	8	daily communication
I always hope that I have energy and spirit at work. I think as a leader you need to be showing energy, even if you do not feel like that every day you need to go in and show that energy, that passion every day..... If you don't have it then people around you drop a level, their energy goes low as well, and they sort of feed off you	8	energy/passion/spirit/communicable
People in the past say I am a role model to them, not necessarily from within the business but externally	8	role model/energy



It frustrates me and hence why we have made some changes, as every manager hasn't been strong enough to challenge that back. But that's what I want.	8	staff issues/operational/self	
I was saying this the other day to someone that we don't recruit roles here, we recruit people, because the culture of the company is really, really important	3	recruit/culture	Team building
20 years ago I probably knew more about everything we did because it was all about design, I guess what has changed for me is that I have gone from knowing the most in the team to being arguably the person who knows the least in the team	3	team	
We are very value based, like, we have company values and we look for those in our hiring process..... we try to hire for values and feel	4	value based recruitment	
To a certain extent, yeah, I think it's the conditions but also that people can influence other people as well.	4	peer influence	
We recruit we always try to recruit like-minded people that have positivity	5	recruit/positive/culture fit	
From my point of view, you just need the right managers in place, if the managers aren't into learning and development, if they don't understand that that is important for their team, they are not going to thrive.... this has been another very big learning curve, so we do a lot more interviewing around values and attitudes, behaviours not just the skills. It is far more important to get someone who can fit in with your values than has already got the skills, obviously there are some job roles that you need the skills	8	recruit/learning/values	

At one-point engagement wasn't so high and that was one of my key indicators. I would say 'look what is going on in these teams' I wouldn't use the word thriving, but obviously if they are not happy with something going on	8	happy/sense of community	
Our new mission, sorry our new vision, is to get people addicted to learning	8	vision/learning	

The Aggregate Dimension of the distinctive features of the owner-manager's thriving supported by Second Order Themes, First Order Codes and First Order Concepts

First Order Concepts	Participant	First Order Codes	Second Order Themes
I never really switch off	1	Spill-over/always on	Intertwinedness
You know unfortunately this is going to sound like a cliché, but this (my business) is my hobby	2	Spill-over/always on	
I don't think any owner-manager is going to say to you that work is 9-5. Even if it is not apparent, I am always thinking about work in one shape or another, even when I am on holiday	3	Spill-over/always on	
Certainly, from my perspective being an owner manager I feel very interwoven with the business, the business's success is also my success, and the business's growth and development is also my growth and development, I think those two trajectories are quite aligned	4	Spill-over/interwoven	
If the business thrives, I thrive, so long as I don't sink, because if the business struggles, I struggle, intertwined is the word	7	interwoven	
I just want to make the business as successful as possible, I don't want to get to the stage where I take too much risk that I put everybody's livelihood on the line, but equally no risk is the worst thing you can do, so I accept thatwhen I think	1	Risk averse	Attitude to risk/speed of change

am I making the right decisions, I am completely committed to it		
Through the recession, it was the biggest wake-up call, it made me re-evaluate my business and what I do and how I do it..... you think it's going to go on forever	2	recession/ wake-up call
I get bored quickly..... it helps us thrive in the good times, but it can be a threat as well in a recession	3	Risk seeking
If things stand still for any length of time, I get pretty frustrated and annoyed and that pushes me on..... I don't think anything is not solvable in the long-term, but sometimes progress is a bit slow for me" (004)	4	Risk seeking/change
I think as you push forward you are constantly pushing into new ground, new territory that you haven't been in before	4	Advancement/challenge
I always want change and progression.	4	Change/advancement
When things are moving quick, when people are making amazing progress independent of me that is just when I feel the most energetic	4	Risk seeking/advancement
If things stand still for any length of time I get pretty frustrated and annoyed and that pushes me on	4	Lack of change/speed
I have got an opportunity to acquire two more (shops), but I am just putting them on hold because I want to work on these (existing ones) and really make them quite profitable	6	Risk averse

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I am in Vxxxx (a network group in the NW England) and we have a speaker once a month and we have a round table discussion about each other's problemsit gives me a better outlook on life.	1	OM peer support	Support for the owner-manager
I have a few people that I class are friends if I have had a really bad day and I will ring them up and I will say "I have had a shit day, how's your day been?" it's quite a new thing and its working because it's better to do that because you can't do it in work	1	OM peer support	
I think people, I need more good people and I am focused, and what I have been talking to everybody about, to have a good business you need a good team and I think now I have a good team.	1	Team/support	
That is building a team, people around me who support that kind of attitude	3	Team/attitude	
Everyone kind of working towards similar goals and understanding the life blood..... company and that gives me energy	3	Goal alignment/energy	
I want to be around people with energy,	6	Team/energy	
I want people around me to take it if I have something positive to give	6	Team/positive/energy	
All look out for each other.....some people have gone out of business and doing whatever at home, we still keep in touch whether its FB or LinkedIn, we still keep an eye out for them	7	Network/contextual/support	
For people who want to grow their business, probably be build your network.	8	Network/contextual/support	
Having a good network at home.	8	Network/support	